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To protect, promote & improve the health
of all people in Florida through integrated
state, county & community efforts.



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Vision: To be the Healthiest State in the Nation

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ESCAMBIA COUNTY YOUTH TELL BIG TOBACCO: I AM NOT A “REPLACEMENT”

- Students Working Against Tobacco (SWAT) Are Fighting Back During Kick Butts Day –

PENSACOLA, FL – Escambia County, Florida’s Students Working Against Tobacco (SWAT) are participating in the 20th annual Kick Butts Day on March 18, 2015. This national day of activism, sponsored by the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, empowers youth to speak up and take action against the tobacco industry.

For this year’s national observance, youth across the country will use social media to counter the tobacco industry’s efforts to groom young people into new customers. The “#NotAReplacement” campaign was created in 2014 by Florida’s SWAT youth. Kick Butts Day takes Florida’s SWAT campaign nation-wide by encouraging everyone in the U.S. to use social media to tell tobacco companies that they are not “replacement smokers,” an industry term often used to refer to young people.

Escambia County’s SWAT students will encourage their peers to post photographed self-portraits (selfies) and statements to social media, declaring they are not a replacement. “We want tobacco companies to know we are smarter than they think. We are leaders, dancers, athletes, and more. But, we are not replacement smokers.” said Kendyl Knight, a member of Escambia County SWAT. “We are hoping this message can go viral”.

The University of West Florida’s Students Ending Tobacco (SET) student organization will also join the fight. SET students will post selfie statements using the #NotAReplacement tag while adding their own hash tag #BreatheEzUWF to gain momentum for their efforts to implement a tobacco-free campus policy.

In addition to more smokers quitting, every day about 1,300 people in the United States die because of smoking. In response to this customer loss, tobacco companies target new potential customers. “Youth have always been a target for the tobacco industry,” said Tobacco Free Florida Bureau Chief Shannon Hughes. “Numerous internal tobacco industry documents show that tobacco companies perceived young people as an important target and developed products and marketing campaigns aimed at them.”

Nine out of 10 smokers start by age 18. Youth and young adults rarely consider the long-term health consequences of tobacco use when they start smoking. Because nicotine is a highly-addictive drug, three out of four youth smokers continue smoking well into adulthood, often with serious and even deadly consequences. In fact, about half of long-term smokers die prematurely from smoking-related causes. If current smoking rates continue, 5.6 million U.S. children alive today, who are younger than 18 years of age, will die prematurely as a result of smoking.

ABOUT KICK BUTTS DAY

Kick Butts Day is a national day of activism that empowers youth to stand up, speak out and take action against the tobacco industry. Kick Butts Day is organized by the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids and sponsored by the United Health Foundation. The first Kick Butts Day was held in 1996.

ABOUT TOBACCO FREE FLORIDA

The Tobacco Free Florida campaign is a statewide cessation and prevention campaign funded by Florida's tobacco settlement fund. Tobacco users interested in quitting are encouraged to use one of three ways to quit. Since 2007, more than 126,140 Floridians have successfully quit, using one of these free services. To learn more about Tobacco Free Florida and the free quit resources, visit www.tobaccofreeflorida.com or follow the campaign on Facebook at www.facebook.com/TobaccoFreeFlorida or on Twitter at www.twitter.com/tobaccofreefla.

The Florida Department of Health works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

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