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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 31, 2022

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MDHHS urges Michiganders to recognize World No Tobacco Day on May 31 by quitting commercial tobacco

LANSING, Mich. – The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) is recognizing World No Tobacco Day by urging Michiganders to quit commercial tobacco.

World No Tobacco Day is an initiative created by the World Health Organization (WHO) and is observed each year on May 31. The annual health observance was created to draw the world's attention to the tobacco epidemic, and the preventable death and diseases it causes. This year's campaign focuses on the negative impact that the tobacco industry has on the environment, and calls attention to the environmental impact the tobacco industry has on the planet, which further harms human health.

"We know that the use of tobacco takes a significant toll on a people's health," said Dr. Natasha Bagdasarian, chief medical executive at MDHHS. "It damages nearly every organ in the body, including the lungs, heart, blood vessels, reproductive organs, mouth, skin, eyes and bones. However, something that people may not consider is the significant impact that the tobacco industry has had on our natural resources. This year's World No Tobacco Day campaign sheds a light on that fact."

The tobacco industry damages the earth's ecosystem by contributing 84 megatons of greenhouse gases every year. Growing tobacco also contributes to deforestation. The WHO reports that around 3.5 million hectares of land are destroyed each year. Additionally, because 90% of tobacco production occurs in the developing world, the environmental burden most heavily affects countries that lack the resources to cope with these problems. Reducing commercial tobacco use would increase the overall well-being of populations by reducing death and disease and increasing environmental sustainability.

In addition to affecting the earth's eco-system, cigarette waste has a large negative impact on local communities. Cigarette butts are the most littered item on earth, and major cities spend millions of dollars each year to clean up the waste that smokers leave behind. Cigarette waste is toxic and when littered, it can contaminate water, poison fish and hurt animals that consume it.

The WHO provides several resources to those who are interested in helping raise awareness of the harmful effects of tobacco. Learn more ways to help on the [WHO website](#).

For residents in need of assistance in quitting tobacco, the Michigan Tobacco Quitline – 800-QUIT-NOW (800-784-8669) – is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. From now through Sept. 30, all new enrollees at the Michigan Tobacco Quitline will receive two weeks of free nicotine replacement therapy along with a coaching session.

For more information about the Quitline, visit Michigan.gov/tobacco.

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