

NEWS RELEASE
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Health Department offers ‘Freedom From Smoking’ program for parents in conjunction with Great American Smokeout Nov. 17

(Lawrence, KS) – The Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department encourages people to quit using tobacco as part of the Great American Smokeout on Nov. 17.

Tobacco use is the single most preventable cause of death and disease in the United States. Cigarette smoking causes more than 480,000 deaths annually, including about 42,000 from secondhand smoke exposure, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. For every person who dies because of smoking, at least 30 live with a serious smoking-related illness such as lung or heart disease. Despite these risks, smoking is still common practice. In Douglas County, 1 in 7 individuals identified themselves as a current smoker in 2013, according to the Kansas Behavior Risk Factor Surveillance System.

Unfortunately, quitting is hard. “Most smokers want to quit. It’s just really difficult for them to do because nicotine, a drug found naturally in tobacco, is very addictive,” Community Health Planner Charlie Bryan said. “It takes most smokers multiple attempts to quit, so if you fail, try, try again.” In 2014, nearly 3 out of 5 adult smokers in Kansas tried to quit at least once.

For the first time, the Health Department is offering a “Freedom From Smoking” program for parents who smoke and want to quit, and it offers an \$85 incentive for those who complete it. There are three ways parents can participate in the program:

- Take a class that meets from 2 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays from Nov. 17 to Dec. 20 (except for Thanksgiving and Dec. 1) at the Health Department, 200 Maine St.
- Complete a self-guided “Freedom From Smoking” workbook that can be picked up and dropped off at the Health Department’s front desk.
- Complete an online course.

Parents can sign up by contacting Bryan at 785-843-3060 or info@ldchealth.org. The deadline to enroll is 5 p.m. Nov. 16.

The Health Department also encourages tobacco users to talk to their health care provider or a Quitline coach because they will be more successful at quitting. Tobacco users who receive Quitline services are 60 percent more likely to successfully quit compared to those who attempt to quit without assistance. The Kansas Tobacco Quitline — KSquit.org or 1-800-QUIT-NOW (784-8669) — offers 24/7 free counseling services.

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