



News for Immediate Release

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Department of Health Celebrates "World No Tobacco Day," Highlights Communities for Establishing Tobacco-Free Parks and Recreation Areas

Harrisburg – In honor of "World No Tobacco Day" today, the Department of Health recognized communities in southeastern Pennsylvania for participating in the state's Young Lungs at Play program.

Young Lungs at Play is a statewide program that promotes the establishment of tobacco-free parks and playgrounds by educating municipal officials on the risks and dangers of second-hand smoke and tobacco litter.

"Each year, 18,500 Pennsylvania youth under the age of 18 become new daily smokers," Secretary of Health Michael Wolf said. "Young people imitate actions that they see on a regular basis, and reducing the instances in which they see adults lighting up, especially in areas children frequent such as parks, may help reduce the number of young people who try smoking."

Currently, more than 450 municipalities, youth recreational organizations and schools districts have joined the tobacco free parks and playgrounds program across Pennsylvania. After meeting the criteria of creating a tobacco-free policy, ordinance or resolution, the municipalities are given signs to hang in parks and playgrounds. They are also added to the Pennsylvania Young Lungs at Play Honor Roll and given a certificate of recognition from the Department of Health.

The department will continue to highlight communities over the coming months for their hard work and dedication to implementing tobacco-free zones where children play. For a full list of the Young Lungs at Play Honor Roll please visit, www.health.state.pa.us/ylap.

"World No Tobacco Day" was created by the World Health Organization (WHO) to highlight the health risks associated with tobacco use and advocate for effective policies to reduce tobacco use across the globe. According to WHO, tobacco use kills nearly six million people each year worldwide, of which more than 600,000 are non-smokers dying from breathing second-hand smoke.

"It's incredibly important that we educate and encourage healthy habits at an early age in order to prevent the prevalence of smoking among future generations," Wolf said. "That is why programs such as Young Lungs at Play are a key focus area for the department. We're proud that nearly every county in the state is adopting Young Lungs at Play and we are also encouraged by those who are taking

advantage of additional programs and services we offer to help those who have started to kick the habit.”

The department offers the Pennsylvania free “Quitline” at 800-QUIT-NOW (800-784-8669), where trained coaches develop and carry out a plan to quit smoking for each caller.

The service offers Pennsylvania residents one-on-one coaching, free nicotine replacement therapy in the form of patches, lozenges or gum and provides ongoing support and resources.

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