



NEWS RELEASE



For Immediate Release

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(10/30/25) Southern 7 Health Department Increasing Smoke-Free Education (November is Tobacco Cessation Month)

While the number of Americans who smoke declines each year, whether it's cigarettes or vaping, smoking causes more than 480,000 deaths in the United States, with secondhand smoke contributing to an additional 41,000 deaths nationwide. November is Tobacco Cessation Month. Through funds received from the Illinois Department of Public Health, Southern 7 Health Department is reaching out in its communities to increase awareness and offer support to people who want to quit.

No matter your age or how long you've been smoking, studies show that quitting can improve your health immediately and even more over the long term, and is the most preventable cause of serious illness and death. According to the American Cancer Society, quitting smoking lowers your risk of cancer, heart and lung problems such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), lung infections, and circulation problems or issues around your heart and other body parts.

Over the next several months, Southern 7 Health Department will offer increased community support that includes, but is not limited to:

- School-based educational sessions addressing the risks associated with vaping and e-cigarette use.
- Educational materials and Smoke-Free Illinois Act window clings distributed to local food and non-food establishments to support awareness and compliance.
- Collaboration with local medical providers including physicians, hospitals, dentists, and mental health professionals through the Illinois Tobacco Quitline Referral Partnership; an Initiative that facilitates access to tobacco cessation education and support services for community members.
- Observance of the Great American Smokeout on November 20. Celebrated for nearly 50 years by the American Cancer Society, this day is an opportunity for people who smoke to commit to healthy, smoke-free lives – not just for a day, but year round.

"While it's your personal choice to smoke, realizing that smoking is a primary cause of severe illness including cancer and heart disease could save your life," said Shawna Rhine, Southern 7 Community Outreach Coordinator. "Throughout the month of November, and especially on November 20, we are simply asking that if you smoke, try stopping for at least one day to consider your health benefits from not smoking."

There are many ways to quit smoking, and some work better than others. The free Illinois Tobacco Quitline(ITQL) can connect you with counselors and resources to help you increase your chances of quitting successfully.

For more information, visit ITQL at www.quityes.org or call 866-QUIT-YES. Southern 7 Health Department is available by calling 618-634-2297 or downloading the Southern 7 app for a clinic near you.

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