**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: March 16, 2018**

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**Indiana Kids to ‘Kick Butts’ on March 21**

***State Leaders Challenged to Create First Tobacco-Free Generation***

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Kids in Indiana will unite against tobacco use on March 21 as they join thousands of young people nationwide to mark Kick Butts Day. More than 1,000 events are planned across the United States for this annual day of youth activism, sponsored by the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids. (See below for a list of local events.) Kick Butts Day Indiana is supported by the Anthem Foundation, the philanthropic arm of Anthem, Inc.

On Kick Butts Day, kids encourage their peers to be tobacco-free, reject tobacco companies’ devious marketing and urge elected officials to help make the next generation tobacco-free.

This year, Kick Butts Day is focusing attention on the progress the U.S. has made in reducing youth smoking and the actions needed to create the first tobacco-free generation. Since 2000, the national smoking rate among high school students has fallen by 71 percent (from 28 percent in 2000 to 8 percent in 2016). However, the fight against tobacco is far from over:

* Tobacco use is still the No. 1 cause of preventable death in the U.S., killing over 480,000 people and costing about $170 billion in health care expenses each year.
* Tobacco companies spend $8.9 billion a year – $1 million every hour – to market tobacco products in the U.S., often in ways that appeal to kids.
* Electronic cigarettes have become the most popular tobacco product used by kids – nationwide, 11.3 percent of high school students use e-cigarettes compared to 8 percent who smoke cigarettes. The latest trend with teens is JUUL, an e-cigarette that looks like a computer flash drive and comes in flavors like mango and fruit medley.

In Indiana, tobacco use claims 11,100 lives and costs $2.93 billion in health care bills each year. Currently, 8.7 percent of Indiana’s high school students smoke.

On Kick Butts Day, kids and health advocates are calling on elected officials to implement proven strategies that make up a “roadmap to a tobacco-free generation.” These strategies include tobacco tax increases, comprehensive smoke-free laws, raising the tobacco sale age to 21, well-funded tobacco prevention programs and banning the sale of flavored tobacco products.

“This Kick Butts Day, we’re proud to partner with Anthem Foundation to help create the first tobacco-free generation in Indiana,” said Matthew L. Myers, President of the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids. “We’ve made enormous progress in reducing youth tobacco use, and Kick Butts Day will build momentum to get us across the finish line. Elected leaders in every state should stand with kids and support proven strategies to prevent youth tobacco use.”

On Kick Butts Day, kids join in creative events ranging from classroom activities to educate their peers about the harmful ingredients in cigarettes to rallies at state capitols.

In Indiana, activities include:

Kids and health advocates will host a Kick Butts Day rally and community health fair on **Monument Circle** in **downtown Indianapolis**, calling to create the first tobacco-free generation. Speakers will include Rep. Tim Brown (R-Crawfordsville), health advocates and youth activists. Time: 12 PM. Location: North Steps, 1 Monument Circle, Indianapolis. Contact: Hannah Carlock (812) 621-7662.

On March 20, students at **Franklin High School** in **Brookville** will decorate the school for their peers to see as they arrive on Kick Butts Day, including writing and illustrating facts in chalk in front of the school, and displaying anti-tobacco messages in cups in the fence outside school. Time: 4 PM. Location: 1 Wildcat Lane, Brookville. Contact: Candice Murray (765) 256-0840.

Culminating a week full of anti-tobacco activities, the **Healthy Communities of Clinton County (HCCC)** will work with the **IMPACT** youth group to clean up cigarette butts from the main strip of **Mulberry**. Members will display the butts to demonstrate the damage that cigarette butts do to health and the environment. Time: 3 PM. Location: 120 E. Jackson Street, Mulberry. Contact: Kacie McGill (765) 430-9497.

Partnering with the **Minority Health Coalition**, students in **Elkhart** will stand up to big tobacco through an anti-tobacco roller-skating party at **Holiday Skate Center**. Time: 4:30 PM. Location: 28736 County Road 20, Elkhart County. Contact: Velishea Billings (574) 226-5400.

**The Boys & Girls Club of Zionsville-West** will hold a rally in their gym featuring a student-made video to educate their community about the harms of tobacco and the benefits of maintaining a tobacco-free lifestyle. Time: 4:15 PM. Location: 5964 S. 700 E., Whitestown. Contact: Sarah Webler (317) 769-7311.

**The Boys and Girls Club of Wayne County** will host a Kick Butts Day Carnival where kids will have the opportunity to sign a #BeTheFirst pledge to be the first tobacco-free generation, create a memorial wall to illustrate the costs of tobacco, and walk through a maze of deception that illustrates the deceptive marketing of tobacco companies. Time: 4 PM. Location: 1717 S. L. Street, Richmond. Contact: Jenny O’Brien (765) 962-6922.

**The Boys & Girls Club of Zionsville-East** will host a Kick Butts Day basketball tournament. Students will dip their hands in glow in the dark paint, and place their handprint on an anti-tobacco banner to pledge that they “GLOW without lighting up.” Time: 4 PM. Location: 1575 Mulberry Street, Zionsville. Contact: Glenn Sanford (317) 945-5679.

On March 22, students from **Frankfort High School** will sign a banner pledging to remain tobacco free, and learn the dangers of tobacco during a presentation at lunch. Students will place numerous “body bags” throughout the school to highlight the cost of smoking. Time: 7 AM. Location: 1 S. Maish Road, Frankfort. Contact: Catherine Summers (765) 654-8545.

All events will take place March 21 unless otherwise indicated. For a full list of Kick Butts Day activities in Indiana, visit [www.kickbuttsday.org/map](http://www.kickbuttsday.org/map). Additional information about tobacco, including state-by-state statistics, can be found at [www.tobaccofreekids.org](http://www.tobaccofreekids.org).