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

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

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Kids in Michigan 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.)

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 Michigan, tobacco use claims 16,200 lives and costs $4.59 billion in health care bills each year. Currently, 10 percent of Michigan’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.

“On Kick Butts Day, kids are celebrating the progress we’ve made to reduce tobacco use and building momentum to get us across the finish line,” said Matthew L. Myers, President of the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids. “Elected leaders in every state can help create the first tobacco-free generation by supporting 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 Michigan, activities include:

In conjunction with **BreatheWell Newaygo County**, students at **White Cloud High School** will create anti-tobacco posters, sign a tobacco-free pledge wall, and give away Kick Butts Day t-shirts. Time: 11:30 AM. Location: White Cloud High School, 555 E. Wilcox Avenue, White Cloud. Contact: Rachel Uganski (231) 670-6441.

The **American Heart Association**, **American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network**, and the **American Lung Association** will educate the **Lansing** community about Michigan’s statewide smoke-free air law, tobacco prevention funding, and legislation to raise the tobacco sales age to 21. Time: 9 AM. Location: Boji Tower, 124 W. Allegan Street, Lansing. Contact: Jason Harder (248) 320-7956.

Community members of **Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians Community Health** will host “Smoke Pigs, Not Cigs,” to raise awareness about the tobacco epidemic in the local community. The pig roast will be followed by a skating event. Time: 5 PM. Location: Big Bear Arena, 2 Ice Circle Chi Mukwa, Sault Ste. Marie. Contact: Colin Welker (906) 458-5796.

Students from **Marshall Middle School** will sign a tobacco-free pledge, create interactive posters, and display the harmful contents of cigarettes, chew, and vaping to educate classmates about the dangers of tobacco during lunch. Time: 10:30 AM. Location: Marshall Middle School, 100 E. Green Street, Marshall. Contact: Joanna Schultz (734) 788-1141.

On March 22, the student president and first vice president of **Michigan Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA)** will present a workshop on taking down tobacco at the FCCLA State Leadership Conference in **Midland**. They will educate attendees on the harms of tobacco use, and how to prevent tobacco use in schools and communities. Time: 1:30 PM. Location: Great Hall Banquet & Convention Center, 5121 Bay City Road, Midland. Contact: Cindy Rodrigues (734) 276-7234.

All events will take place March 21 unless otherwise indicated. For a full list of Kick Butts Day activities in Michigan, 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).