Southwest Nebraska
Public Health Department

News Release

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For Immediate Release
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Great American Smokeout

Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department is encouraging residents to participate in the American Cancer Society's Great American Smokeout on Thursday, November 19, 2026. This annual event raises awareness about the health risks of tobacco use and encourages individuals to take steps toward quitting smoking and other forms of tobacco use.

Tobacco use remains a significant public health concern and is a leading preventable cause of disease and premature death. In southwest Nebraska the latest estimates from 2023 showed between 13 and 15 percent of adults are regular smokers. Smoking increases the risk of cancer, heart disease, stroke, and chronic respiratory conditions. Quitting tobacco can improve health at any age, and the benefits begin shortly after a person stops smoking.

"The Great American Smokeout is a great opportunity for individuals to take that first step toward a healthier future," states Sarah Minnick, Program Manager at SWNPHD. "We understand that quitting tobacco can be difficult, and support and resources can help. Whether someone is ready to quit today or simply thinking about making a change, every step toward a tobacco-free life matters."

SWNPHD encourages residents who use tobacco to consider making November 19th their quit day. Those who are not ready to quit are encouraged to use the day to learn more about the health benefits of quitting and explore available support options.

Resources to help individuals quit tobacco include:

- **Nebraska Tobacco Quitline:** Call 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669) for free tobacco cessation support.
- **Smokefree.gov:** Access helpful tools, tips, and support for quitting smoking.
- **American Cancer Society:** Visit www.cancer.org for information about tobacco use, quitting, and cancer prevention.

Family members, friends, and community members can also play an important role by encouraging and supporting those who are working toward quitting tobacco. A supportive environment can make a meaningful difference in someone's quit journey.

Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department remains committed to promoting healthier communities through tobacco prevention education, public health outreach, and resources that support healthier lifestyles.

For more information about quitting tobacco call Sarah Minnick at 308-345-4223. Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department serves nine counties including Chase, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Hayes, Hitchcock, Keith, Perkins, and Red Willow counties. Our website, swhealth.ne.gov, contains many resources and additional information that are helpful to prevent disease, promote healthy habits, and protect health. Follow SWNPHD on Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram.

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