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Social Services | Public Health | Mental Health

news release

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Quitting smoking starts with one day

Smokers are encouraged to quit tobacco use for one day for the Great American Smokeout Thursday, Nov. 19. The Tobacco Education Network, a part of the Humboldt Allies for Substance Abuse Prevention coalition, and the American Cancer Society (ACS) urge smokers to take advantage of local resources that can help them quit during this annual event.

Getting help through counseling and/or prescription medications can double or triple a smoker's chances of quitting successfully, according to the ACS, and smokers who use counseling, nicotine-replacement therapy or a combination of the two are more likely to quit for good.

Nicotine-replacement therapy is available at Open Door Community Health Centers and United Indian Health Services (UIHS). Telephone counseling is accessible through the California Smoker's Helpline at 800-NO-BUTTS. Smokers should consult with their doctors to determine if medication is a good option.

According to the California Department of Public Health, COVID-19 attacks the lungs and people who smoke or vape tobacco or marijuana may be especially at risk of contracting the virus. Recently, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) added smoking to the list of conditions that place someone at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19 because tobacco smoke and aerosol from vaping harms the cells of the lungs and weakens the ability to respond to infection.

Californians who smoke a pack a day can spend up to \$3,000 a year on cigarettes. The ACS says each pack results in \$35 in health costs to the smoker, which is nearly \$13,000 a year. The CDC reports that smoking continues to be the number one preventable cause of death in the U.S. Contact Open Door Community Health Centers at 707-441-1624 and UIHS at 707-825-5000. For more information on the Great American Smokeout, visit

cancer.org/healthy/stayawayfromtobacco/greatamericansmokeout/.

Cigarette smokers who reside in California and are 18 years old or older can receive a free, two-week starter kit of nicotine patches mailed directly to their homes while supplies last. For more information and to find out if you are eligible, call the California Smokers' Helpline 1-800-NO-BUTTS (800-662-8887).

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