

**November 13, 2018**

***DOH-Miami-Dade and Tobacco Free Florida Encourage Tobacco Users to Quit Smoking on Great American Smokeout***



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**Miami, Fla.** — In observance of the Great American Smokeout (GASO), sponsored by the American Cancer Society, the Florida Department of Health in Miami-Dade County and Tobacco Free Florida will be joined by multiple Miami-Dade County employers to encourage tobacco users to make a plan to quit smoking on Thursday, November 15.

The Great American Smokeout raises awareness about the dangers of smoking and the many effective resources available to help smokers successfully quit.

While it is common knowledge that smoking is bad for the smoker, not many consider the effect this addiction has on local businesses. In Florida alone, the annual direct costs to the economy attributable to smoking exceed \$19.6 billion, including: workplace productivity losses of \$4.4 billion; premature death losses of \$7.9 billion; and direct medical expenditures of \$7.2 billion.<sup>1</sup> Between both the additional healthcare costs and losses in productivity, an employee who smokes could cost a business more than \$6,000 every year.<sup>2</sup> For each employee that quits, a business can save as much as \$2,000 per year through reduced insurance cost.<sup>3</sup>

Smoking remains the leading cause of preventable disease and death in Florida and the United States.<sup>4</sup> On average, smokers die 10 years earlier than nonsmokers.<sup>5</sup> Smoking can also cost individuals a lot more than just their health. A pack-a-day smoker in Florida can spend more than \$2,000 in just one year and more than \$10,000 in five years on cigarettes.

Local employers, including Miami-Dade County, Jackson Health System, University of Miami and other worksites throughout the county will participate in the observance of the Great American Smokeout.

Tobacco Free Florida's Quit Your Way program makes it easier than ever for tobacco users to access evidence-based, free tools and services to help them quit tobacco. For more information, please visit [tobaccofreeflorida.com/quityourway](http://tobaccofreeflorida.com/quityourway).

People can also access Tobacco Free Florida's online Cost Calculator to find out how much money they could save by quitting smoking at [tobaccofreeflorida.com/calculator](http://tobaccofreeflorida.com/calculator).

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**About the Florida Department of Health**

The department, nationally accredited by the [Public Health Accreditation Board](#), works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

Follow us on Twitter at [@HealthyFla](#) and on [Facebook](#). For more information about the Florida Department of Health please visit [www.FloridaHealth.gov](http://www.FloridaHealth.gov).

### **About Tobacco Free Florida**

The department's Tobacco Free Florida campaign is a statewide cessation and prevention campaign funded by Florida's tobacco settlement fund. Since the program began in 2007, more than 188,000 Floridians have successfully quit using one of Tobacco Free Florida's free tools and services. There are now approximately 451,000 fewer adult smokers in Florida than there was 10 years ago, and the state has saved \$17.7 billion in health care costs. To learn more about Tobacco Free Florida's Quit Your Way services, visit [www.tobaccofreeflorida.com](http://www.tobaccofreeflorida.com) or follow the campaign on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/TobaccoFreeFlorida](https://www.facebook.com/TobaccoFreeFlorida) or on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/tobaccofreefla](https://www.twitter.com/tobaccofreefla).

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<sup>1</sup> Penn State. "Potential Costs and Benefits of Smoking Cessation for Florida." 30 April 2010. Web. 1 March 2011. <http://www.lungusa.org/stop-smoking/tobacco-control-advocacy/reports-resources/cessation-economic-benefits/reports/SmokingCessationTheEconomicBenefits.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> Berman, Micah, Crane, Rob, Seiber, Eric, Munur, Mehmet. Estimating the cost of a smoking employee. *British Medical Journal*. 2014;176(12):1792-1798. doi:10.1001/jamainternmed.2016.6530.

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<sup>4</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *The Health Consequences of Smoking—50 Years of Progress: A Report of the Surgeon General*. Atlanta: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2014.

<sup>5</sup> Jha P, Ramasundarahettige C, Landsman V, et al. 21st Century Hazards of Smoking and Benefits of Cessation in the United States. *New England Journal of Medicine* 2013;368:341–50 [accessed 2017 Mar 28].