

March 9, 2022

Teens in Miami-Dade County Help Lead Florida's Movement Against Tobacco

Saesha Wani and Kyle King Elected By Students Working Against Tobacco to Its Leadership Board



Contact:

Communication Office
786-336-1276

Miami, Fla. — Students Working Against Tobacco (SWAT), Florida's statewide youth-led movement to combat the tobacco and nicotine industries, announced the names of its new Youth Advocacy Board members. Saesha Wani of Jose Marti MAST 6-12 Academy and Kyle King of Miami Palmetto Senior High School were named Youth Advocacy Board Members. Youth Advocacy Board members assist in recruiting and maintaining members in SWAT, assist in planning and implementing SWAT activities and serve as the liaison between the state SWAT organization and their local SWAT membership by providing updates and recommendations as needed.

The Youth Advocacy Board works in collaboration with the Florida Department of Health's Bureau of Tobacco Free Florida to help plan SWAT's initiatives and goals and provides input on the state's youth prevention efforts. SWAT aims to empower, educate, and equip Florida youth to stand up against Big Tobacco. Students work with county providers to support initiatives that educate their peers about tobacco and nicotine use, help protect youth from tobacco, and strengthen local policies, including those that protect youth from exposure to e-cigarette products.

In 2021, 36.3% of Florida high school students reported having tried inhaled nicotine products¹. Nicotine is a highly addictive substance that can alter the development of the brain, which doesn't stop developing until around the age of 25,² and even e-cigarette products marketed as being nicotine-free have been found to contain traces of it. SWAT raises awareness about the dangers posed by e-cigarettes and nicotine products and aims to make them less acceptable and less accessible.

Other teens elected to the Youth Advocacy Board are, from Region 1: Alyssa Wheeler; Devyn Langlely, Shanae Kisi; Nataleigh Parham. Region 2: Natasha Counts; Isabela Baxter; Ivy Baxter; Mackenzie Donnelly. Region 3: Kamyia Williams; Gunner Reynolds; Mahika Podarala; Bryan Amador. Region 4: Toni Maxwell; Isabela Velez; David Egues.

"I am looking forward to working along with my peers to advocate for tobacco control and take action in our communities," said Saesha Wani. "I am grateful to work with so many talented youth minds to achieve our goals," said Kyle King. "The family we have created here is astounding and I am excited for the world to see what we have next."

Members of the SWAT Youth Advocacy Board will serve a term through June 30, 2022.

###

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.

About Students Working Against Tobacco (SWAT)

SWAT is Florida's statewide youth organization working to mobilize, educate and equip Florida youth to revolt against and de-glamorize Big Tobacco and the e-cigarette industry. SWAT is a united movement of empowered youth working towards a tobacco free future.

To learn more about Students Working Against Tobacco, visit www.swatflorida.com or follow us on Instagram at [@swatflorida](#).

¹ Florida Youth Tobacco Survey (FYTS), Florida Department of Health, Bureau of Epidemiology, 2021. (Accessed January 6, 2022)

² U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. E-Cigarette Use Among Youth and Young Adults. A Report of the Surgeon General. Atlanta, GA: 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, 2016. (Accessed January 6, 2022)