

May 9, 2022



## **MIAMI-DADE COUNTY ANNOUNCES TOBACCO FREE FLORIDA WEEK, MAY 8-14, WILL FOCUS ON MENTAL HEALTH, TOBACCO CESSATION**

*“Mental Health Equals Mental Wealth: Overcoming the Influences of Tobacco on the Mind” theme to encourage awareness, encouragement and support for cessation*

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**Miami, Fla.** – Each year, Tobacco Free Florida and the Florida Department of Health in Miami-Dade County announce Tobacco Free Florida Week as the beginning of an initiative focusing on a major public health issue connected to tobacco use. This year, Tobacco Free Florida Week’s theme is “Mental Health Equals Mental Wealth: Overcoming the Influences of Tobacco on the Mind.” Tobacco Free Florida Week will be observed May 8-14, 2022 and is timed to align with *Mental Health Awareness Month*.

Tobacco Free Florida is using “Mental Health Equals Mental Wealth” to address and correct misconceptions, including that tobacco provides an alternative when people feel stressed or anxious. Part of this traces back to decades ago, with tobacco companies marketing heavily to those with mental health issues and promoting myths and falsehoods about supposed health benefits of tobacco use.<sup>1</sup>

This year’s theme of highlights the fact that tobacco and nicotine use can lead to negative health consequences among individuals with mental and/or behavioral health conditions.<sup>2</sup> People with behavioral health conditions die about five years earlier than people without such conditions, and more than 50% of these deaths are from tobacco-related diseases.<sup>3</sup>

On a positive note, when people diagnosed with mental or behavioral health issues quit smoking, they are also more likely to avoid other drugs and harmful substances.<sup>4</sup>

“The focus on nicotine use and mental health is so important as many are unaware of the negative health consequences these nicotine products have and how they can exacerbate mental health conditions,” said Yesenia Villalta, DNP, MSN, APRN, Health Officer/Administrator of the Florida Department of Health in Miami-Dade County. “This week partners and staff will help educate our community on the harms of nicotine products and available resources to assist those in need.”

Smoking can exacerbate mental health symptoms and complicate treatment.<sup>5</sup> This can include interfering with the medications often associated with mental and behavioral health treatments.<sup>6</sup> Public health officials in Miami-Dade and across Florida are using the occasion of Tobacco Free Florida Week to encourage everyone to have conversations about the effects of tobacco, the benefits of quitting and the support available from trusted sources, including [www.TobaccoFreeFlorida.com](http://www.TobaccoFreeFlorida.com).

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## About Tobacco Free Florida

The Florida Department of Health'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 254,000 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](http://www.facebook.com/TobaccoFreeFlorida) or on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/tobaccofreefla](http://www.twitter.com/tobaccofreefla).

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<sup>1</sup> Apollonio, D., & Malone, R. E. (2005). Marketing to the marginalised: tobacco industry targeting of the homeless and mentally ill. *Tobacco Control*, 14(6), 409-415. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1136/tc.2005.011890> Retrieved from <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/73d0x34w>

<sup>2</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2021, December 3). Tobacco use and quitting among individuals with behavioral health conditions. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Retrieved April 5, 2022, from <https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/disparities/mental-illness-substance-use/index.htm>

<sup>3</sup> Richter KP, Arnsten JH. A rationale and model for addressing tobacco dependence in substance abuse treatment. *Substance Abuse Treatment, Prevention, and Policy*. 2006;1(1):23.

<sup>4</sup> Weinberger, Andrea H et al. "Cigarette Smoking Is Associated With Increased Risk of Substance Use Disorder Relapse: A Nationally Representative, Prospective Longitudinal Investigation." *The Journal of clinical psychiatry* vol. 78,2 (2017): e152-e160. doi:10.4088/JCP.15m10062

<sup>5</sup> Smoking Cessation Leadership Center. Fact Sheet: Drug Interactions With Tobacco Smoke. San Francisco: Smoking Cessation Leadership Center, University of California; 2015.

<sup>6</sup> Desai HD, Seabolt J, Jann MW. Smoking in patients receiving psychotropic medications: a pharmacokinetic perspective. *CNS Drugs*. 2001;15(6):469-94. doi: 10.2165/00023210-200115060-00005. PMID: 11524025.