

PRESS RELEASE

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LOCAL YOUTH AND COALITION JOIN FORCES TO EDUCATE COMMUNITY

Tobacco Prevention Advocacy in Jackson County

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

JACKSON (July 30, 2008) – The Jackson County Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition (JCSAPC) is proud to announce that they are teaming up with local youth to visit county tobacco retailers this summer and fall. These visits are free of charge and will provide informational packets containing the required legal stickers and educational materials discouraging the sale of tobacco to underage persons.

Retailers will receive stickers for display at each “point of sale”, an updated legal age-limit sticker, materials to educate employees about the proper sale of tobacco, and information related to fines and policies regarding the sale of tobacco to underage youth. If a retailer does not display the Youth Tobacco Act (P.A. 314 of 1998) sticker, the owner can be fined \$50. The sticker states the following:

“The purchase of tobacco products by a minor under 18 years of age and the provision of tobacco products to a minor are prohibited by law. A minor unlawfully purchasing or using tobacco products is subject to criminal penalties.”

Any employee who sells tobacco products to an underage person may be fined \$50 for each offense. These fines do not include the possibility of court costs. Retailers will also be reminded that current laws apply to tobacco products of any kind including: cigarettes, cigars, chew tobacco, blunt wraps, and bulk bagged tobacco.

In Jackson County there are approximately 200 tobacco retailers. Rhonda Rudolph, JCSAPC Vice-Chair and Jackson Tobacco Reduction Coalition Coordinator indicates that “these visits are part of a comprehensive approach which promotes services in Jackson County such as: providing smoking cessation resources including the Michigan Tobacco Quit Line at 1-800-480-QUIT (7848), smoke-free worksite regulation, and educational visits to reduce the sale of tobacco to minors.”

The Jackson County Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition is comprised of community leaders representing local law enforcement agencies, courts, schools, health and human service agencies, substance abuse treatment providers, and media. The Coalition works to provide updated information and support to the local community. In addition to the prevention of alcohol and other illicit drugs, Coalition goals include preventing the access and availability of tobacco products to youth under the age of 18. The Coalition appreciates the continued support of Jackson County tobacco retailers and the community to uphold the integrity of the Youth Tobacco Act.

Kelsey Winston, JCSAPC’s Coordinator, states that, “It is important to remember that 74% of Jackson County youth say that they have *never* smoked cigarettes and 84% think it is *wrong* to smoke cigarettes.” Winston states that this data is a good indicator that most of Jackson’s youth are on the right track to being tobacco-free.

More information about:

- *Jackson County Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition* and its activities, please contact Kelsey Winston at (517) 796-5133 or via email at kwinston@uwjackson.org

Additional Facts:

- Overwhelming evidence directly links the use of tobacco products to increased risks for cancers of all kinds, heart disease, and other chronic illnesses.
- According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), cigarette smoke is a class A carcinogen, “at which no level of exposure by human beings is safe.”
- The CDC also reports that 438,000 people a year die from tobacco use-more than motor vehicle injuries, alcohol use, HIV, illegal drug use, suicides, and murder combined.