



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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***Live Well Allegheny, Tobacco Free Allegheny Celebrate Tobacco Cessation Week
Allegheny Quits for Life Being Recognized November 15-21***

PITTSBURGH – Allegheny County Health Department (ACHD) Director Dr. Karen Hacker was joined today by Tobacco Free Allegheny, local officials, advocates and former smokers to celebrate November 15-21 as *Allegheny Quits for Life* week in Allegheny County. Designated by a formal joint proclamation of Allegheny County Executive Rich Fitzgerald and Council Member Tom Baker, the week is dedicated to promoting smoking cessation and healthy activities.

Smoking is still allowed in hundreds of indoor public places in Allegheny County today. At 23%, adult smoking rates in the county are higher than the Pennsylvania (21%) and national (18%) averages. That statistic is one of the primary reasons that [The Plan for a Healthier Allegheny](#), released in May, commits to reducing adult smoking rates by 10%, from 23% to 20.7%, over the next five years.

Allegheny Quits for Life week includes numerous events and coincides with the American Cancer Society's Great American Smokeout, being held on Thursday, November 19. Events kicked off on Sunday, November 15 when a team of pharmacy students from Duquesne University and the University of Pittsburgh visited select Giant Eagle stores to distribute information about quitting smoking. Students will visit another group of Giant Eagle stores on Saturday, November 21.

Today, Pittsburgh Mercy Health System brought Dancing Classrooms Pittsburgh downtown for 'Merengue Monday,' linking quitting smoking with making fun healthy choices in support of *Live Well Allegheny's* #howdoyoulivewell campaign. Tobacco Free Allegheny also announced the winners of a countywide anti-tobacco public service announcement (PSA) contest in middle and high school categories. Winning PSAs will be featured on KDKA TV's *Pittsburgh Today Live* on Thursday, November 19.

"There are too many smokers in Allegheny County. We have the highest rate of exemptions per capita to Pennsylvania's Clean Indoor Air Act and there are almost 900 tobacco retailers here," said Dr. Hacker. "Our county's estimated annual smoking related healthcare costs are \$635 million. Smoking contributes to cancer, heart disease, strokes and respiratory conditions. For those who smoke, there are many ways to quit. We encourage you to try for yourself and your loved ones."

Those thinking about quitting smoking are encouraged to call **1 800 QUIT NOW (784-8669)**. The PA Free Quitline offers personalized counseling sessions and free nicotine replacement therapy (patches, gum or lozenges) as available. Online cessation services are available at <https://pa.quitlogix.org>.

Throughout the week, the Health Department is asking people to share images using the hashtags and #howdoyoulivewell on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Many have already been posted with answers to the question: What are you quitting for?

Live Well Allegheny was launched in January 2014 as a comprehensive, innovative strategy on wellness that embraces a broad concept of living well to include physical health, mental wellness, personal and community safety, prevention and preparedness, and much more. The effort is being led by the Board of Health and Health Department Director Dr. Karen Hacker. For more information on the *Live Well Allegheny* campaign, including how to become a *Live Well Allegheny* community, visit www.LiveWellAllegheny.com.

Find more information about *Allegheny Quits for Life* at www.livewellallegheny.com and www.tobaccofreeallegheny.org.

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