

Mission:

To protect, promote & improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county & community efforts.



Rick Scott
Governor

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Interim State Surgeon General

Vision: To be the Healthiest State in the Nation

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GULF YOUTH WORK TOWARDS A TOBACCO FREE FUTURE

SWAT Members Are Fighting Back During Kick Butts Day

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Gulf County, Fla. – Gulf County's Students Working Against Tobacco (SWAT) are speaking up and taking action against the tobacco industry for the 21st annual Kick Butts Day on March 16. This national day of activism, sponsored by the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, empowers youth to fight back against Big Tobacco.

On Wednesday, March 16, new smoke-free signage approved by the City of Wewahitchka will be displayed at the Lake Alice Park and TL James Ball Park. To celebrate this achievement and nationally recognized holiday, SWAT students from Wewahitchka will conduct a roadside cleanup around Lake Alice Park. The SWAT students from Port St. Joe will be conducting a roadside cleanup near Centennial Bank on Hwy 98. Both events are scheduled for 3:30 pm local time.

Every day, about 1,300 people in the United States die because of smoking.ⁱ In response, the tobacco companies target a new generation of potential customers. A 1984 internal document from R.J. Reynolds', the makers of Camel, stated: "Younger adult smokers are the only source of replacement smokers... If younger adults turn away from smoking, the industry must decline, just as a population which does not give birth will eventually dwindle."ⁱⁱ

Youth and young adults rarely consider the long-term health consequences of smoking when they start. Because of nicotine, a highly addictive drug, three out of four youth smokers continue smoking well into adulthood, often with serious and even deadly consequences.ⁱⁱⁱ In fact, about half of long-term smokers die prematurely from smoking-related causes.^{iv}

If current smoking rates continue, 5.6 million U.S. children who are currently younger than 18 years of age will eventually die prematurely as a result of smoking.^v Most concerning, almost all initiation of daily tobacco use begins by the age of 18.^{vi}

To reduce youth tobacco use initiation, SWAT youth work with the Gulf County Tobacco-Free Partnership on a variety of local initiatives, including point of sale tobacco retail surveillance.

Stores where adolescents shop most often have more than three times the amount of cigarette advertisements and promotional materials outside of the stores and almost three times more materials inside, compared to other stores in the community, according to a survey.^{vii}

SWAT aims to empower, educate and equip Florida youth to revolt against Big Tobacco. SWAT is a movement of empowered youth working together to de-glamorize tobacco use. Their efforts aim to shape tobacco-free norms, make tobacco less desirable, less acceptable and less accessible.

About Kick Butts Day

Kick Butts Day is a national day of activism that empowers youth to stand out, speak up and seize control against Big Tobacco. Kick Butts Day is organized by the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids. The first Kick Butts Day was held in 1996.

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. Tobacco users interested in quitting are encouraged to use one of the state's three ways to quit. Since 2007, more than 137,000 Floridians have successfully quit, using one of these free services. To learn more about Tobacco Free Florida and the state's free quit resources, visit www.tobaccofreeflorida.com or follow the campaign on Facebook at www.facebook.com/TobaccoFreeFlorida or on Twitter at www.twitter.com/tobaccofreefla.

The department 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](https://twitter.com/HealthyFla) and on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/HealthyFla). For more information about the Florida Department of Health please visit www.floridahealth.gov.

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ⁱ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The Health Consequences of Smoking —50 Years of Progress: 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, 2014

ⁱⁱ R.J. Reynolds report, "Younger Adult Smokers: Strategies and Opportunities." February 29, 1984 .Bates No. 501928462-8550

ⁱⁱⁱ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Preventing Tobacco 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, 2012.

^{iv} U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Preventing Tobacco 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, 2012.

^v U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The Health Consequences of Smoking —50 Years of Progress: 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, 2014.

^{vi} U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Preventing Tobacco 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, 2012.

^{vii} Henriksen, L, et al., "Reaching youth at the point of sale: Cigarette marketing is more prevalent in stores where adolescents shop frequently," Tobacco Control 13:315-318, 2004.