

Mission:

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



Rick Scott
Governor

John H. Armstrong, MD, FACS
State Surgeon General & Secretary

Vision: To be the Healthiest State in the Nation

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 18, 2015



Contact: Communications Office
Communications Office
(850) 245-4111
or Denise Rodriguez
media@tobaccofreeflorida.com
(786) 574-4192

Florida Youth Tell Big Tobacco: I am Not a “Replacement”

- Students Working Against Tobacco (SWAT) Are Fighting Back During Kick Butts Day –

TALLAHASSEE – Florida’s Students Working Against Tobacco (SWAT) are speaking up and taking action against the tobacco industry for the 20th annual Kick Butts Day on March 18. This national day of activism, sponsored by the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, empowers youth to fight back against Big Tobacco.

This year’s national signature activity called #NotAReplacement was created by Florida’s SWAT youth in 2014. Kick Butts Day has taken SWAT’s campaign national by encouraging young people across the country to take selfies that tell Big Tobacco they are not “replacement smokers,” a terms used by the tobacco industry itself to describe young people.

Not only are more smokers quitting, every day, but about 1,300 people in the United States also die because of smoking.¹ 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.”²

“Youth have always been a target for the tobacco industry,” said Tobacco Free Florida Bureau Chief Shannon Hughes. “Numerous internal tobacco industry documents show that tobacco companies perceive young people as an important target and develop products and marketing campaigns aimed at them.”

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.³ In fact, about half of long-term smokers die prematurely from smoking-related causes.⁴

Nine out of 10 smokers start by age 18.⁵ If current smoking rates continue, 5.6 million U.S. children alive today who are younger than 18 years of age will die prematurely as a result of smoking.⁶

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.

Florida Department of Health

Office of Communications
4052 Bald Cypress Way, Bin A-04 • Tallahassee, FL 32399-1705
PHONE: 850/245-4111 • FAX 850/488-6495

www.FloridaHealth.gov

TWITTER:HealthyFLA
FACEBOOK:FLDepartmentofHealth
YOUTUBE: fldoh
FLICKR: HealthyFla
PINTEREST: HealthyFla

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 and sponsored by the United Health Foundation. 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 126,140 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.

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¹ 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

² R.J. Reynolds report, "Younger Adult Smokers: Strategies and Opportunities." February 29, 1984 .Bates No. 501928462-8550

³ 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.

⁴ 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.

⁵ 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.

⁶ 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.