



# MEDIA RELEASE

KNOX COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## It's Quittin' Time in Knox County

*Knoxville, Tenn.* — The Knox County Health Department (KCHD) together with Smoke-Free Knoxville and the Community Health Council are joining a statewide effort to help tobacco users quit. Tennessee Quit Week, proclaimed by Governor Bill Haslam as Feb. 22 – 26, 2016, is a time to celebrate all Tennesseans who have quit using tobacco products and to encourage others to join them. The theme of the week-long campaign is “It’s Quittin’ Time in Tennessee.”

“Since reducing tobacco use is one of the top four goals in our 2016 – 2019 Community Health Improvement Plan, we see this statewide effort as a great opportunity to partner with Smoke-Free Knoxville and the health department to help raise awareness about the many free resources available to help people quit,” said Kristy Altman, chair of Community Health Council.

“As part of our efforts to make this a healthier community, we support all those who want to stop using tobacco,” said Beth LaFontaine, chair of Smoke-Free Knoxville. “We’re also encouraging our local health care providers to talk with patients about tobacco use and share resources for quitting with those who use tobacco.”

More information and available resources:

- Tennessee Tobacco QuitLine: 1-800-QUIT-NOW
- KCHD and local resources for those trying to quit: 865-215-QUIT
- Training for health care providers in the five As approach for tobacco interventions: 865-215-5170
- The Smoke-Free Knoxville Coalition: [www.smokefreeknoxville.com](http://www.smokefreeknoxville.com)
- The Community Health Council: [www.healthyknox.org](http://www.healthyknox.org)

“We are here to encourage, support and assist anyone trying to break a nicotine addiction and move toward a life free from smoking, dipping, or using any other tobacco products like electronic smoking devices,” said Kerri Thompson, public health educator in KCHD’s Tobacco Use Prevention and Control Program. “We know how hard it can be to kick the habit. Whether it’s calling us, the QuitLine or talking with your health care provider, we encourage everyone to learn about all the available options that can help you succeed.”



Reducing tobacco use is one of the priority health issues outlined in KCHD's 2014-2015 Community Health Assessment. Tobacco use, particularly in youth and pregnant women, as well as the increased use of e-cigarettes and vaping products are two areas of concern outlined in the assessment. In fact, e-cigarette use among middle and high school students tripled from 2013 to 2014, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The Community Health Council used data from KCHD's health assessment to identify the goals in its health improvement plan, and then consulted with local subject matter experts to formulate measurable objectives.

Tennessee Quit Week is part of a statewide effort led by the Tennessee Department of Health to raise awareness of the Tennessee Tobacco QuitLine and other free resources available to help Tennesseans quit smoking and/or using other tobacco products. These proven, effective services can double a tobacco user's chances of quitting.

**About Knox County Health Department:**

The Knox County Health Department (KCHD) is a governmental agency dedicated to making every person a healthy person. As the first health department in Tennessee to achieve national accreditation by the Public Health Accreditation Board, KCHD's mission is to encourage, promote and assure the development of an active, healthy community through innovative public health practices. The organization conducts disease surveillance, prevention and control; emergency preparedness; nutrition and physical activity promotion; tobacco use prevention; health equity promotion; immunizations; and much more. For more information, visit [www.knoxcounty.org/health](http://www.knoxcounty.org/health).

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