



PRESS RELEASE FOR LOCAL MEDIA

Central Michigan District Health Department

"Promoting Healthy Families, Healthy Communities"

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To: Local News Media

From: Andrea Hall, Therapist

RE: LGBTQ Goals for the New Year

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LGBTQ life goals for a healthier New Year!

Resolutions sometimes revolve around finances, health or life goals. For LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual, Transgender, Queer) community members, many of whom face a variety of unique health risks — making and keeping health-related New Year resolutions is doubly important. LGBTQ people in the U.S. are two times more likely to begin smoking than their straight counterparts, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Bisexual and transgender, data suggests, are at even higher risks. The causes vary — social pressures, targeting by tobacco companies and efforts to relieve stress to name a few. Smoking is especially deadly for those living with HIV/AIDS. With proper treatment people with HIV are living longer, more productive lives, but tobacco is one of the greatest threats to their long term health and well-being. Tobacco related illnesses are killing many living with HIV, on average lives are shortened by 10-12 years.

Stop Smoking: Quitting today is one of the first most positive and most long-lasting changes you can make to better your health. If LGBTQ people stopped smoking, it would save Millions of lives! "Quitting tobacco can be challenging because nicotine is a highly addictive drug. We encourage people to call the Michigan Tobacco Quitline at 1-800-QUIT-NOW," stated Dr. Morse, Medical Director for the Central Michigan District Health Department.

Research shows that while quitting is difficult for most tobacco users, people who use tobacco can increase their success in quitting with help. Quitters are most successful when using a combination of therapies, including resources such as nicotine replacement, counseling, self-help materials, and a strong support network of family and friends. "The holidays can be a stressful time, but smoking doesn't have to be a part of the New Year," said Morse, "Calling the Michigan Tobacco Quitline

now can help people make 2016 tobacco-free. Quitting tobacco today will lead to a lifetime of health benefits.”

Get tested: Gay and bisexual men, along with other men who have sex with men (MSM) and transgender women remain at higher risk for HIV infection. Setting up a regular HIV and STD testing schedule is one of the most important ways you can increase your health. Knowing your status, whether for HIV or other STDs, helps you to take better health precautions and, if you should test positive, opens up opportunities for treatment — the single-most important step an HIV-positive person can take. Call your local health department or primary care doctor for testing information.

More resources and information on LGBTQ health and an in-depth information and resource kit on top LGBTQ health issues from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services can be found at <http://store.samhsa.gov>. You can call the Michigan Tobacco Quitline at 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669).

This article has been brought to you by Central Michigan District Health Department, which serves the counties of Arenac, Clare, Gladwin, Isabella, Osceola and Roscommon. Visit our website at www.cmdhd.org, LIKE Central Michigan District Health Department on Facebook and follow us on Twitter @CMiDHD.

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