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Oklahoma Takes Next Big Step in Tobacco Control Program "Tobacco Stops With Me" Media Campaign Encourages All Oklahomans to

OKLAHOMA CITY (January 7, 2008)

Oklahoma is taking the next big step in its tobacco control movement with the launch of its first statewide media campaign, "Tobacco Stops With Me." The campaign is designed specifically for Oklahoma and was created with input from research and focus groups around the state. Consisting of television, radio, print ads, and an interactive Web site, the "Tobacco Stops With Me" campaign highlights how tobacco use impacts us as individuals, how it influences our relationships, and how each Oklahoman has a role to play in the movement to reduce the burden of tobacco use in our state.

The campaign will begin on January 7th with television and radio ads as well as the interactive Web site, www.stopswithme.com. Online information includes how to quit, how to support someone who is trying to quit and what each of us can do to make Oklahoma a healthier place to live, work, and learn. The stopswithme.com site also offers the opportunity for Oklahomans to share their personal experiences related to tobacco.

Funding for the campaign is provided by the Oklahoma Tobacco Settlement Endowment Trust (TSET) with technical assistance from the Oklahoma State Department of Health Tobacco Use Prevention Service. The "Tobacco Stops With Me" campaign will be independently evaluated by the University of Oklahoma College of Public Health.

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TOBACCO STOPS WITH ME.

WWW.STOPSWITHME.COM



Oklahoma Takes Next Big Step in Tobacco Control Program - ADD ONE

“In Oklahoma, as the earnings from the endowment’s investments have grown, effective programs to reduce tobacco use have been expanded,” said Kenneth Rowe, Chair of the TSET Board of Directors. “Our first efforts were to establish the Oklahoma Tobacco Helpline and to fund key community-based programs across the state. Now we’re excited to launch the next vital component, the “Tobacco Stops With Me” media campaign. The campaign is about the statewide movement to reduce the tobacco problem. It will provide a public call to action for all Oklahomans to make a difference by quitting or never starting tobacco use, and by getting involved to help make Oklahoma a tobacco-free and prosperous place to live.”

“We have a great deal of evidence about what it takes to reduce tobacco use,” said Dr. Michael Crutcher, Secretary of Health and Commissioner of the Oklahoma State Department of Health. “If everyone in the state does their part as this important new campaign urges, Oklahomans can significantly reduce tobacco use and its costs in financial and human terms.”

“We have already started to see progress in the reduction of the number of Oklahoma youth who begin smoking and an increase in the number of adults who quit,” said Crutcher. “However, we still have a long way to go.”

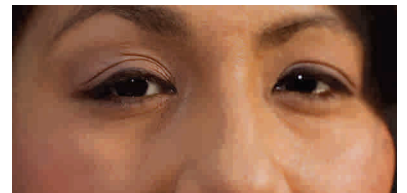
“The tobacco industry is still spending hundreds of millions each year to promote tobacco use in Oklahoma,” said Tracey Strader, executive director of TSET. “We’re all paying the price. Tobacco is Oklahoma’s leading cause of preventable death, resulting in thousands of lives lost and more than \$2.7 billion in health care costs and lost productivity each year. It is time we all say ‘Tobacco Stops With Me.’”

The Oklahoma Tobacco Settlement Endowment Trust was established through a constitutional amendment approved by Oklahoma voters in 2000. While most state governments have failed to keep their promise to use tobacco settlement funds for tobacco prevention and other programs to improve health, Oklahomans have created an endowment to assure that funds will be available for these purposes for generations to come. To learn more go to: www.tset.ok.gov

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Editor Sidebar - Oklahoma Takes Next Big Step in Tobacco Control Program - ADD TWO

- Tobacco is Oklahoma's leading cause of preventable death, killing more Oklahomans each year than alcohol, auto accidents, AIDS, suicides, murders, and illegal drugs combined.
- In addition to the 5,800 Oklahomans who die each year from tobacco, another 100,000 Oklahomans suffer from serious tobacco-caused disease.
- Every day, 16 Oklahomans die from tobacco use and the equivalent of a classroom of students gets hooked. Second-hand smoke exposure causes heart disease, cancer and respiratory disease among healthy non-smokers, killing an estimated 700 Oklahomans each year.
- Smoking during pregnancy is the leading cause of low-birth-weight and infant mortality in Oklahoma.
- Tobacco use costs Oklahomans over \$2.7 billion in medical expenses and lost productivity every year, or an average cost of \$750 for every Oklahoman every year.
- The tobacco industry spends an estimated \$246 million each year to promote smoking among Oklahomans, or an average of about \$70 for every Oklahoman every year.
The more adults who quit tobacco, the fewer kids ever start.

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