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News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Clark County Health District Offers Reasons to Stop Smoking

(Las Vegas, Nev. – December 30, 1999) – The Clark County Health District recognizes that each year approximately 2 million Americans successfully stop smoking, many of them as a result of a New Year's resolution. With the onslaught of public awareness campaigns this is a difficult time to be a smoker and many feel that their rights are being infringed upon. Another look at the health implications of smoking, to themselves and the people around them, may provide that extra incentive needed to finally break the habit.

Smoking is the single leading cause of death in the United States. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates smoking causes 434,000 deaths each year, and that as many as 90 percent of all smokers are addicted to nicotine.

The health effects of second-hand smoke, or environmental tobacco smoke (ETS), to non-smokers is also significant. A report by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in 1997 states that each year in the United States, ETS contributes to:

(more)

3,000 deaths due to lung cancer, 35,000 to 62,000 deaths due to heart disease; and 1,900 to 2,700 deaths due to Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).

Annually, ETS exposure is also linked to: 9,700 to 18,600 cases of low birth weight infants; 8,000 to 26,000 new cases of asthma in children; exacerbation of asthma in 400,000 to 1 million children; and 150,000 to 300,000 cases of bronchitis or pneumonia in children 18 months or younger (of which 7,500 to 15,000 require hospitalization.)

To protect yourself or others from the effects of second-hand smoke do not allow smoking in your home. If smoking does take place in your home, increase the ventilation by opening windows or using exhaust fans.

Don't smoke if children are present, their developing lungs are also affected by exposure to second-hand smoke. Infants and children whose parents smoke are among the most seriously affected by exposure to passive smoke and have an increase risk of lower respiratory tract infections such as pneumonia and bronchitis. Second-hand smoke can lead to a buildup of fluid in the middle ear, which is the most common cause of hospitalization of children for surgery.

Anytime and any reason is a good one to stop smoking. Persons interested in more information about the affects of smoking, or resources available to help quit smoking, may contract the Clark County Health District Health Education Department at 383-1217 or the Tobacco User's Helpline at 877-0684.

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