

Clark County Health District
625 Shadow Lane
Las Vegas, NV 89106
(702) 385-1291

News Release

Contact: Maria Azzarelli
(702) 383-1217

Jennifer Sizemore
(702) 383-1225

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Youth Coalition Responds to Smoking Rates in Nevada

(Las Vegas, Nev. – November 6, 2000) – Members of the Clark County Health District sponsored Youth Anti-Tobacco Coalition, known as “XPOZ,” reacted strongly to information released by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) that lists Nevada first in terms of tobacco use.

Coalition member Domanisha Hicks states, “I don’t smoke but I’m still being hurt by environmental tobacco smoke. I lived with my grandmother, who was a smoker, and I was sick with bronchitis all the time. I am shocked that we have the highest smoking rate in the nation and it bothers me that because I live here, I am constantly exposed to second-hand smoke.”

The youth coalition is made up of approximately 30 young people, ranging in age from 12-17. The participants took part in a training program sponsored by the American Legacy Foundation TRUTH campaign tour, and their ongoing interest in tobacco use led to the formation of XPOZ.

“It is encouraging to see a group of young people so passionate about an important issue,” said Dr. Kwalick, chief health officer for the Health District. “Tobacco use is one of

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the most preventable causes of disease and unfortunately Nevada has some of the weakest laws in the nation pertaining to tobacco use by minors and the authority of local government. Educating our youth against the harmful effects of tobacco is going to be one of our strongest tools as we work to lower our smoking rates, and this coalition will play an important role.”

XPOZ is composed of culturally diverse young people who are the driving force behind the youth coalition – the first of its kind in Nevada. Their mission is “. . . to inform teens about the lies put before them by the tobacco industry. We are tired of being the target of their marketing and will no longer be victimized by their need for profit. Rejection is the weapon in the fight for our lives.”

The goal of the coalition is to educate their fellow youth and create positive messages that will help curb tobacco use among teens. Coalition members will be holding the first youth led anti-tobacco summit in the summer of 2001 and are creating a web page.

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