



## NEWS RELEASE

**For Immediate Release:**

Wednesday, May 30, 2001

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### **“World No Tobacco Day” Organizers Hope to Save 1,200 lives**

(Salt Lake City, UT) — Each year in Utah and the nation, smoking kills more people than alcohol, AIDS, car accidents, illegal drugs, murders, and suicides combined. Tobacco use kills more than 400,000 people each year around the world, which equates to approximately 1,200 lives per day.

“World No Tobacco Day” encourages people to say “no” to tobacco for a day and become educated on the dangers of tobacco.

“We strongly encourage tobacco users to take part in “World No Tobacco Day” by not using tobacco products for the day as the first step in quitting for life,” said Heather Borski, Community Health Specialist from the Utah Department of Health’s Tobacco Prevention and Control program.

In Utah, approximately 14 percent of adults and 11.9 percent of youth in grades 9-12 smoke. This equates to about 198,000 adults and 17,400 youth; one third of who are likely to die from tobacco use. According to the World Health Organization, if current trends continue, more than five million kids in the world under 18 who are alive today will ultimately die from tobacco use. Additionally, it is estimated that tobacco-attributable deaths will rise to 8.4 million in 2020 and 10 million in about 2030.

The benefits of quitting smoking can manifest after only one day: blood pressure decreases, temperature of extremities increases to normal, carbon monoxide level in the blood drops to normal, and one’s chance of a heart attack decreases. After two weeks to three months after quitting, circulation

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improves. One to nine months after quitting, coughing, sinus congestion, fatigue, and shortness of breath decrease and lung function improves. If you manage to quit for a year, your excess risk of coronary heart disease is half that of a smoker’s. “There are benefits from quitting no matter how long or how heavily a person has been smoking – it is never too late to quit,” says Borski.

In addition to encouraging people to stop using tobacco themselves, “World No Tobacco Day” also promotes the dangers of second-hand smoke. Second-hand smoke has been causally associated with a range of life threatening health effects, including lung cancer and heart disease. “Ideally we would like all tobacco users to try quitting for the day, and if not, at least take some step toward reducing or eliminating their tobacco use,” said Dr. Scott Williams, Deputy Director of the Utah Department of Health. “People who don’t think they can quit for a day could try not to smoke around others for the day or make an appointment with their doctor to talk about quitting or call the Tobacco Free Utah Resource Line to get information on smoking cessation programs.”

The World Health Organization established “World No Tobacco Day” in 1988 to draw worldwide attention to the negative impact of tobacco on public health. The 191 member countries of the World Health Organization hold the observance every year on May 31.

For additional information, please contact the Tobacco Free Utah Resource Line at 1-877-220-3466.

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