Mental Health Month LTE Template

Drafted April 11, 2018

**Tobacco takes bigger toll on individuals with mental health concerns**

Dear Editor,

START YOUR LETTER BY SHARING THAT MAY IS MENTAL HEALTH MONTH, WHICH FOCUSES ON RAISING AWARENESS OF MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES AND REDUCING STIGMA. NOW STATE THAT TOBACCO ADDICTION HAS A MASSIVE IMPACT ON THOSE WITH MENTAL HEALTH CONCERNS.

SHARE THAT 29% OF WISCONSIN RESIDENTS DIAGNOSED WITH DEPRESSION CURRENTLY SMOKE COMPARED TO 17% OF THE GENERAL POPULATION. ALSO SHARE THAT ACCORDING TO THE CDC, 40% OF ALL CIGARETTES SMOKED BY ADULTS IN THE U.S. ARE SMOKED BY INDIVIDUALS WITH SOME FORM OF MENTAL ILLNESS OR SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER.

USE THIS PARAGRAPH TO DISCUSS HOW THIS NEWS MAKES YOU FEEL (ANGRY, FRUSTRATED, SAD, ETC.). IF YOU OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW DEALS WITH MENTAL ILLNESS, DISCUSS HOW THAT IS HARD ENOUGH TO MANAGE WITHOUT THE ADDED STRESS OF TOBACCO ADDICTION.

IF YOU SELECTED BEHAVIORAL HEALTH IN YOUR WORKPLAN, DISCUSS WHAT YOUR NETWORK OR COALITION IS DOING LOCALLY TO ADDRESS THE ISSUE. IF YOU DIDN’T SELECT BEHAVIORAL HEALTH, DISCUSS THE WORK OF THE WiNTiP PROGRAM AND HOW IT HELPS BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PROVIDERS INTEGRATE TOBACCO CESSATION INTO THE CARE THAT THEY PROVIDE. INCLUDE THAT BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS CAN LEARN MORE ABOUT THE PROGRAM AT HELPUSQUIT.ORG.

ENCOURAGE ALL TOBACCO USERS, REGARDLESS OF THEIR MENTAL HEALTH STATUS, TO CALL THE QUIT LINE AT 1-800-QUIT-NOW (784-8669) FOR FREE HELP QUITTING TOBACCO. LET READERS KNOW THAT THEY CAN LEARN MORE ABOUT LOCAL EFFORTS AT **(NETWORK/COALITION WEBSITE/SOCIAL MEDIA PAGE)**.