November LTE Template – Native American Heritage Month

Drafted October 11, 2018

NOTE: Final letters should be no more than 250 words

**Commercial tobacco disrespects Native American heritage**

Dear Editor,

START YOUR LETTER BY SHARING THAT NOVEMBER IS NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH, WHICH PAYS TRIBUTE TO THE RICH ANCESTRY AND TRADITIONS OF NATIVE AMERICANS. ONE KEY PART OF THAT HISTORY IS TRADITIONAL TOBACCO, WHICH TOO OFTEN HAS BEEN OVERSHADOWED BY COMMERCIAL TOBACCO.

USE THIS PARAGRAPH TO EXPLAIN THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN TRADITIONAL AND COMMERCIAL TOBACCO. DISCUSS TRADITIONAL TOBACCO’S USE AS A MEDICINE IN NATIVE AMERICAN CULTURE AS WELL AS ITS SPIRITUAL IMPRTANCE. YOU CAN FIND INFORMATION ON TRADITIONAL TOBACCO FROM <http://keepitsacred.itcmi.org/tobacco-and-tradition/traditional-tobacco-use/>.

HIGHLIGHT THAT COMMERCIAL TOBACCO IS NOT THE SAME AS TRADITIONAL TOBACCO. IN FACT, COMMERCIAL TOBACCO LIKE (EXAMPLES) CARRIES NONE OF THE BENEFITS OF TRADITIONAL TOBACCO, INSTEAD BRINGING WITH IT DEATH AND DISEASES LIKE (GIVE EXAMPLES OF SEVERE HEALTH PROBLEMS FROM COMMERCIAL TOBACCO).

NEXT PROVIDE EXAMPLES OF HOW COMMERCIAL TOBACCO COMPANIES HAVE CO-OPTED NATIVE AMERICAN TRADITIONS TO MAKE THEM SEEM MORE NATURAL OR HEALTHY (FIND MORE ON THIS TOPIC AT <https://tobaccocontrol.bmj.com/content/early/2018/03/01/tobaccocontrol-2017-053950>).

NOW DISCUSS THE DISPROPORTIONATE IMPACT COMMERCIAL TOBACCO TAKES ON NATIVE AMERICANS IN WISCONSIN. SHARE THAT ACROSS 2014-2016, 37% OF NATIVE AMERICANS IN WISCONSIN SMOKE, FAR ABOVE THE SMOKING RATE OF WISCONSIN’S GENERAL POPULATION.

CLOSE BY LETTING READERS KNOW THEY CAN LEARN MORE ABOUT THE MOVEMENT TO EMBRACE TRADITIONAL TOBACCO AND REJECT COMMERCIAL TOBACCO AT KEEPITSACRED.ORG. ENCOURAGE COMMERCIAL TOBAQCCO USERS TO GET FREE HELP TO QUIT BY CALLING 1-800-QUIT NOW (784-8669).