November Press Release Template – BRFSS and Tobacco Disparities

Drafted December 2, 2019

For Immediate Release: **(INSERT DATE)**

Contact: **(INSERT NAME, PHONE NUMBER)**

**(Network/Coalition Name): Addressing Disparities Key to Ending Tobacco Use**

**(CITY, WI)** – The Wisconsin Department of Health Services recently released data from the 2018 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey (BRFSS), which collects data on adult tobacco use in Wisconsin. Overall, smoking among Wisconsin adults slightly increased from last year (16.4% in 2018, up from 16% in 2017), and remains above the national average of 14%. However, members of the **(Coalition/Network)** say the real story is the huge gap in smoking rates among certain population groups.

“For decades, the tobacco industry has targeted African Americans, the LGB community, American Indians, and individuals experiencing poverty through advertising and promotions, and unfortunately, their efforts have paid off,” said **(Contact Name)**. “As a result of strategies designed to hook them on an addictive product, these populations smoke cigarettes at much higher rates than the general public.”

Members of the **(Network/Coalition)** also point to other factors for higher tobacco use rates, including racism, discrimination, and poverty. The stress of these factors combined with less access to prevention and cessation services help create conditions that encourage tobacco use and make it harder to quit.

**(Coalition/Network)** is working to create change in **(Community name)** by (**DESCRIBE YOUR LOCAL EFFORTS TO ADDRESS DISPARITIES. THIS COULD INCLUDE LOCAL MEETINGS, EVENTS, OR EDUCATIONAL PRESENTATIONS)**.

“If we want to decrease tobacco use in these populations, we need to talk to those affected” said (**Contact Name**). “These communities know the prevention strategies that will work for them, and we need to make sure they’re a leading voice at the table as we work to give everyone an equal chance of living a tobacco-free life.”

There are plenty of good reasons to quit or avoid using tobacco altogether, including **(GIVE A FEW QUICK EXAMPLES FROM** [**https://smokefree.gov/quit-smoking/why-you-should-quit/reasons-to-quit**](https://smokefree.gov/quit-smoking/why-you-should-quit/reasons-to-quit)**)**. Free help to quit is also available by calling 1-800-QUIT NOW (784-8669), or if you’re on Medicaid, talking to your doctor about the Medicaid cessation benefit.

Visit dhs.wisconsin.gov/tobacco to view the BRFSS fact sheet. For more on the **(Network/Coalition)**, visit **(URL, Social Media, etc.)**.

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