**PRESS RELEASE**

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

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

**National TV ad highlights surprising link between smoking and vision loss**

*Ad coincides with Healthy Vision Month in May*



Most people would be surprised to know that in addition to well-known health effects like lung cancer, smoking cigarettes can also cause vision loss. This May, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) is hoping to raise awareness of this fact through a new national TV ad.

The ad, part of the “Tips from Former Smokers” campaign, features Marlene, a 68 year-old New Yorker diagnosed with

an advanced eye disease at the age of 56 from smoking. The disease, called age-related macular degeneration (AMD) can destroy a person’s central vision—which is needed to read, drive, and see people’s faces.

Photo Credit: CDC

Marlene must undergo monthly eye injections for the rest of her life to prevent complete vision loss. Her ad follows her at one of her injection appointments as she shares the tip “Before they put that needle in your eyeball, look as far away as possible.”

Local health advocates say Marlene’s ad is delivering the simple but powerful message that smoking can harm you in many unexpected ways, like vision loss.

“Marlene showed a lot of courage in sharing her story and she deserves our thanks,” said **(COALITION CONTACT)**. “Hopefully her ad will help tobacco users in **(COUNTY/COMMUNITY NAME)** find the courage to quit and encourage young people never to start in the first place.”

In addition to quitting smoking, other healthy eye behaviors include:

* Getting a dilated eye exam
* Living a healthy lifestyle that includes eating a diet rich in fruits and vegetables, maintaining a healthy weight, and managing chronic conditions
* Knowing your family history
* Using protective eye wear to avoid eye injuries
* Wearing sunglasses

The Wisconsin Tobacco Quit Line provides free quit support at 1-800-QUIT NOW. For more on tobacco prevention and control efforts in **(COUNTY/COMMUNITY NAME), VISIT/CALL WEBSITE, SOCIAL MEDIA, PHONE NUMBER, ETC.**

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