Martin Luther King Jr. Day (1/16/17) LTE Template

Drafted December 9, 2016

Honor Dr. King’s Legacy by Reducing African American Tobacco Use

Dear Editor,

OPEN YOUR LTE BY SHARING THAT MONDAY, JANUARY 16 IS MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DAY. TALK ABOUT WHY YOU THINK HONORING DR. KING’S ACCOMPLISHMENTS IS IMPORTANT AND HOW THE DAY INSPIRES YOU. NOW SHARE THAT ONE WAY WE CAN HONOR HIS LEGACY IS BY WORKING TO REDUCE TOBACCO-RELATED DISPARITIES IN WISCONSIN, ESPECIALLY AMONG AFRICAN AMERICANS.

DEMONSTRATE THE DISPARITY BY SHARING NUMBERS FROM THE [2015 BRFSS](https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/publications/p43073.pdf). SHARE THAT WHILE 17% OF WISCONSIN RESIDENTS SMOKE OVERALL, AFRICAN AMERICANS IN WISCONSIN SMOKE AT MORE THAN DOUBLE THAT RATE. DESCRIBE YOUR REACTION TO THOSE NUMBERS. HOW DO THEY MAKE YOU FEEL?

NOW FOCUS ON WHY AFRICAN AMERICAN RATES ARE HIGHER. TOPICS TO TOUCH ON COULD INCLUDE [AFRICAN AMERICANS’ DISPROPORTIONATE TOBACCO HEALTH BURDEN](http://www.tobaccofreekids.org/research/factsheets/pdf/0006.pdf), [MENTHOL CIGARETTE USAGE RATES](https://www.cancer.gov/news-events/media-resources/multicultural/lifelines/2013/menthol-flavored-cigarettes.pdf), AND [ADVERTISING IN AFRICAN AMERICAN COMMUNITES](http://www.tobaccofreekids.org/research/factsheets/pdf/0208.pdf). NOTE THAT ANY OF THESE EXAMPLES WILL BE MADE MUCH STRONGER BY DISCUSSING WHAT YOU’VE SEEN IN THE COMMUNITY. THE [LOCAL DATA RESOURCES PAGE](http://tobwis.org/educational-advocacy/local-data-resources) IS ANOTHER WAY TO PERSONALIZE.

CLOSING THESE GAPS WON’T BE EASY, BUT IT’S IMPORTANT. DISCUSS HOW REDUCING TOBACCO DISPARITIES IS KEY TO REDUCING TOBACCO RATES OVERALL AND MAKING WISCONSIN A HEALTHIER STATE (YOU CAN ALSO CUSTOMIZE FOR YOUR COMMUNITY TO LOCALIZE).

INVITE READERS TO GET INVOLVED IN LOCAL EFFORTS BY CALLING/VISITING PHONE NUMBER/URL/SOCIAL MEDIA. CLOSE WITH A REMINDER THAT FREE HELP IS AVAILABLE FOR ANY TOBACCO USER READY TO QUIT BY CALLING 1-800-QUIT NOW.