Mental Health Awareness Week (October 6-12)

Template LTE

Drafted September 20, 2019

**We must do more to help individuals coping with mental health concerns quit tobacco**

Dear Editor,

START YOUR LETTER BY SHARING THAT MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS WEEK STARTS SUNDAY, OCTOBER 6. LET READERS KNOW THAT MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS WEEK SEEKS TO EDUCATE THE PUBLIC ON MENTAL ILLNESS, AND THAT THIS YEAR MARKS THE 29TH CELEBRATION OF THIS IMPORTANT ANNUAL EVENT. STATE THAT WHILE INDIVIDUALS DEALING WITH MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES DEAL WITH MANY CHALLENGES, ONE OF THE BIGGEST ONES THEY FACE IS TOBACCO-RELATED ILLNESS.

[USE DATA FROM THE 2017 BRFSS FACT SHEET TO TALK ABOUT THE TOLL TOBACCO TAKES ON THIS POPULATION](https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/publications/p43073.pdf). EXPLAIN THAT THIS POPULATION’S HIGHER USE OF TOBACCO IS THE RESULT OF TARGETED MARKETING ON THE PART OF THE TOBACCO INDUSTRY. [GIVE EXAMPLES OF WAYS THE INDUSTRY TARGETED THIS GROUP AS WELL AS MENTAL HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS](https://truthinitiative.org/research-resources/targeted-communities/tobacco-social-justice-issue-mental-health).

**CHOOSE ONE OF THE FOLLOWING WAYS TO PERSONALIZE YOUR LETTER:**

* DISCUSS WHAT YOUR COALITION/NETWORK IS DOING ON THIS ISSUE. WHAT PARTNERSHIPS HAVE YOU DEVELOPED? HAVE YOU DONE EVENTS OR ACTIVITIES ON THIS ISSUE?
* IF THE LETTER IS WRITTEN BY SOMEONE WITH MENTAL HEALTH CONCERNS THAT USES TOBACCO (OR HAS QUIT), TALK ABOUT HOW TOBACCO IMPACTS YOUR LIFE. DO YOU WANT TO QUIT? WHY? HOW DID YOU FEEL AFTER YOU DID? WHY SHOULD OTHERS NOT START?
* IF THE LETTER IS WRITTEN BY SOMEONE WHO TREATS MENTAL HEALTH, HAVE THEM DISCUSS HOW TOBACCO DOESN’T HELP AND ACTUALLY MAKES THINGS WORSE. WHY SHOULD THOSE WITH MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES QUIT TOBACCO USE?

CONCLUDE BY SHARING THAT THE WISCONSIN NICOTINE TREATMENT INTEGRATION PROJECT (WiNTiP) WORKS TO HELP MENTAL HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS INCLUDE TOBACCO CESSATION IN THEIR WORK. LETS READERS KNOW THAT THEY CAN LEARN MORE ABOUT WiNTiP at HELPUSQUIT.ORG, AND ENCOURAGE TOBACCO USERS TO GET FREE HELP BY CALLING 1-800-QUIT NOW (784-8669) OR IF THEY’RE ON MEDICAID, TALKING TO THEIR DOCTOR ABOUT THE MEDICAID CESSATION BENEFIT.