COVID-19 and Smoking

Template Letter to the Editor

Drafted March 27, 2020

**Smoking Increases COVID-19 Risk**

Dear Editor,

START YOUR LETTER BY SHARING THE COMMON WAYS WE KNOW TO SLOW THE SPREAD OF NOVEL CORONAVIRUS, OR COVID-19, LIKE WASHING YOUR HANDS, NOT TOUCHING YOUR FACE, PRACTICING PHYSICAL/SOCIAL DISTANCING, AND STAYING SAFER AT HOME. NOW, LET READERS KNOW ANOTHER NEW WAY TO REDUCE YOUR RISK – QUITTING SMOKING AND E-CIGARETTES.

LET READERS KNOW THAT THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (WHO) AND OTHER LEADING HEALTH AUTHORITIES HAVE RECENTLY REPORTED THAT SMOKING INCREASES A PERSON’S RISK FOR COVID-19.

DETAIL WHY SMOKING INCREASES THE RISK. **YOU CAN FIND A SIMPLE EXPLANATION AT** [**https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/q-a-on-smoking-and-covid-19**](https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/q-a-on-smoking-and-covid-19)**.** ALSO SHARE THAT SOME EVIDENCE SUGGESTS USING E-CIGARETTES AND OTHER ELECTRONIC SMOKING DEVICES SUPPRESSES THE IMMUNE SYSTEM, MAKING IT MORE VULNERABLE TO RESPIRATOARY ILLNESSES (LIKE COVID-19) **(<https://www.bmj.com/content/366/bmj.l5275>).**

DISCUSS THE TOLL TOBACCO PRODUCTS TAKE ON **WISCONSIN/YOUR COMMUNITY/POPULATION OF FOCUS** (<https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/publications/p43073.pdf>). ALSO SHARE SOME OF THE ADDITIONAL BENEFITS OF QUITTING BEYOND REDUCING COVID-19 RISK. **YOU CAN FIND GREAT EXAMPLES AT** [**https://ctri.wisc.edu/fact-sheets/quit-tobacco-series-fact-sheet-7-what-happens-when-you-quit/**](https://ctri.wisc.edu/fact-sheets/quit-tobacco-series-fact-sheet-7-what-happens-when-you-quit/)**.**

ENCOURAGE READERS TO CALL 1-800-QUIT NOW FOR FREE HELP AND MEDICATIONS. ALSO SHARE THAT MEDICAID RECIPIENTS THAT SMOKE CAN CALL THEIR DOCTOR TO TALK ABOUT THE FREE HELP PROVIDED THROUGH MEDICAID’S CESSATION BENEFIT.

PROVIDE YOUR **NETWORK/COALITION’S WEBSITE, SOCIAL MEDIA, ETC.** IN CASE READERS WOULD LIKE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT TOBACCO PREVENTION EFFORTS IN **(COMMUNITY NAME)**.