

NEWS RELEASE
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**Health department, WorkWell Lawrence working
with employers to increase use of Kansas Tobacco Quitline**

(Lawrence, KS) – The Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department encourages people to quit smoking as part of the American Cancer Society’s 37th annual Great American Smokeout on Thursday, Nov. 15.

Tobacco use is the single most preventable cause of death and disease in the U.S and Kansas. About 3,900 Kansans die from cigarette smoking every year, and more than 290 Kansans die annually from secondhand smoke. “Despite these risks, smoking is still a common practice,” said Chris Tilden, director of Community Health. “In Douglas County, one in four individuals identified themselves as a current smoker in 2010.”

The health department urges residents to use the Kansas Tobacco Quitline — 1-800-QUIT-NOW (784-8669) or www.KSquit.org — when they are ready to quit because it is one of the most cost-effective resources. The service provides free, private counseling and is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Studies have found that using a quitline can more than double a person’s chances of successfully quitting tobacco.

The Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department is working with WorkWell Lawrence, a coalition of 21 Douglas County employers representing more than 10,000 employees, to encourage greater use of the Kansas Tobacco Quitline. WorkWell Lawrence is an initiative of LiveWell Lawrence that is managed by K-State Research and Extension — Douglas County. According to Quitline reports, Douglas County employers made less than five referrals during the past year.

On Thursday, the health department and WorkWell Lawrence will provide training for five Douglas County employers — Allen Press, City of Lawrence, DCCCA, The World Company and The Merc — about how to effectively encourage their employees to use the Kansas Tobacco Quitline. “Employers are key resources to help employees improve their health and well-being,” said Carolyn Crawford, coordinator of WorkWell Lawrence.

The Kansas Tobacco Quitline is offered through the Kansas Department of Health and Environment’s Tobacco Use Prevention Program.

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