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Public Education Campaign Underway
Michigan Going Smoke Free May 1

Muskegon, MI – The Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH) kicked off a Public Education Campaign to raise awareness about the statewide smoke-free air law, which takes effect May 1, 2010. MDCH has developed a website, www.michigan.gov/smokefreelaw, that communicates the details of the law, provides information for businesses on how to comply with the law, and contains affidavits for businesses wishing to apply for the cigar bar and tobacco specialty shop exemptions. In addition, a new television Public Service Announcement (PSA), titled "Smoked Lasagna" will run in partnership with the Michigan Association of Broadcasters, and the PSA can be found on the website.

"It's exciting to begin this new era in Michigan where going out to dinner won't mean being exposed to secondhand smoke for patrons or for employees," said Janet Olszewski, MDCH Director. "This is good news for all Michigan citizens."

"Public Health – Muskegon County is available to answer questions related to the new law, and we are out in the community consulting with businesses regarding the specifics of the law. We're looking forward to May 1st and expect that compliance among business owners in our community will be quite high," stated Ken Kraus, Director of Public Health – Muskegon County.

Gov. Jennifer M. Granholm signed legislation that prohibits smoking in public places such as restaurants, bars, hotels, or any place that serves food or beverages. The Ron M. Davis Law, named after the late chief medical officer of the Department of Public Health, takes effect May 1, 2010, and will make Michigan the 38th state to ban smoking in public places.

The new law allows exemptions for the gaming floors at the three Detroit casinos, but the other casino bars and eateries must be smoke-free, including the casinos' restaurants and hotels. Michigan's 20 American-Indian casinos are not covered by state law. Cigar bars, tobacco specialty shops, home offices, commercial trucks and motor vehicles are also exempt. Individuals and business owners who violate the law will be subject to a $100 penalty for the first offense and $500 for subsequent offenses.

Businesses that are planning to file for the tobacco specialty shop and cigar bar exemptions are encouraged to go to the website www.michigan.gov/smokefreelaw to obtain the proper forms for filing. Due to provisions outlined in the law, affidavits and applications for the exemption will not be accepted prior to May 1, 2010.

For more information about the law, visit www.michigan.gov/smokefreelaw. To request a presentation for your group or business, call Public Health – Muskegon County at (231) 724-1263.

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