

# SCGOVNEWS

Sarasota County Communications  
scgov.net | 941-861-5000



NEWSROOM

PUBLIC RECORDS REQUEST

MEETINGS AND AGENDAS

E-NEWSLETTER

EVENT CALENDAR

Nov. 5, 2012

**Media contact:** Dianne Shipley, 941-861-2852; cell 941-302-1058; [Dianne\\_Shipley@doh.state.fl.us](mailto:Dianne_Shipley@doh.state.fl.us)

## Two local events planned for 37<sup>th</sup> annual Great American Smokeout

The Tobacco Free Partnership of Sarasota County, in collaboration with Tobacco Free Florida, is hosting two local events in conjunction with the 37<sup>th</sup> annual Great American Smokeout, Thursday, Nov. 15, to encourage people of all ages to be tobacco-free for 24 hours.

Scheduled events are:

- A Tools to Quit Smoking class for adults from 10 a.m.-noon at the Sarasota County Health Department, 2200 Ringling Blvd., Sarasota
- A "Turn in Your Cigs" event from 8 a.m.-6 p.m. at New College of Florida, 5800 Bayshore Road, Sarasota. This event will be held in Hamilton Center, and smokers can turn in their cigarettes to receive a free "quit kit" with giveaways, tips to quit smoking, and information on smoking cessation resources.

Both local events are free and open to the public. To register for the Tools to Quit Smoking class, call Karla Brody of the Gulfcoast South Area Health Education Center at 941-552-1280. For more information about the "Turn in Your Cigs" event, contact Hilary Woodcum at the Sarasota County Health Department at 941-861-2997.

Sponsored by the American Cancer Society, the nationwide Great American Smokeout is a public health event that challenges people to plan in advance and quit smoking that day, or to use the day to make a plan to quit.

"The Great American Smokeout provides an opportunity to educate people about the many resources available to help them successfully quit, while encouraging them to make a long-term plan to quit for good," said Sarasota County Health Department Tobacco Prevention Specialist Hilary Woodcum.

The city of North Port will recognize Thursday, Nov. 15, as Great American Smokeout Day through a proclamation to be presented during the North Port City Commission meeting on Tuesday, Nov. 13. The city also will participate in the 37<sup>th</sup> annual Great American Smokeout by offering cessation information to employees at North Port City Hall, 4970 City Hall Blvd., North Port.

The Sarasota County Health Department offers support to local businesses interested in tobacco-free policy implementation. Information regarding tobacco cessation programs for employees also is available. For more information about these services, contact Ro Mohamed of the Sarasota County Health Department at 941-861-2998.

Research shows that seven out of 10 adult smokers report that they want to quit completely. Health officials say that those who are not successful should continue trying because most former smokers make several attempts before finally quitting permanently. In fact, the average smoker attempts to quit between eight and 11 times before ultimately quitting for good.

Tobacco Free Florida offers a number of free and convenient resources to help smokers quit. They include:

- Telephone: Call the Florida Quitline at 1-877-U-CAN-NOW to speak with a Quit Coach who will assist in assessing your addiction and help you to create a personalized quit plan.

- Online: Enroll in the Web Coach®, which will help you create a Web-based quit plan that's right for you. Visit <https://www.quitnow.net/florida>.
- In-person: Visit the Gulfcoast Area Health Education Center (AHEC) website, [www.gsahec.org](http://www.gsahec.org), to locate additional Quit Smoking Now group classes. The organization's local toll-free tobacco referral line is 866-534-7909. The Florida Area Health Education Centers (AHEC) Network's website is [www.ahectobacco.com](http://www.ahectobacco.com).