



NEWS RELEASE

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

RSA Tower 201 Monroe Street, Suite 914 Montgomery, AL 36104
Phone 334-206-5300 Fax 334-206-5520

www.adph.org

'Through With Chew Week' targets reducing smokeless tobacco use

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT:

Julie Hare
(334) 206-3830

For the 25 percent of white male high school students in Alabama who use smokeless tobacco, also known as spit tobacco, snuff, chew, or dip, the odds are increased that throat and mouth cancer is in their future. Researchers believe that DNA-damaging chemicals in tobacco are linked to a higher risk of oral cancer, according to the American Cancer Society.

That's why the Alabama Department of Public Health is promoting *Through With Chew Week*, Feb. 16-22. The national education campaign hopes to decrease smokeless tobacco use and increase awareness of the negative health effects of using these products.

Using smokeless tobacco can lead to tooth loss and gum recession in addition to cancers of the throat and mouth. According to the 2014 Alabama Youth Tobacco Survey, white males were more likely than any other group to try smokeless tobacco in both middle school (31.2 percent) and high school (43.9 percent).

African American males were less likely to try smokeless tobacco, with 13.4 percent of middle school male students and 11.7 percent of high school male students reporting ever trying smokeless tobacco. Only 3 percent of African American male high school students surveyed reported current use of smokeless tobacco products, while overall, nearly 10 percent of high school students surveyed said they had used smokeless tobacco in the past 30 days.

Adult usage is similar to youth usage, with nearly 9 percent of all adults in the 2014 Alabama Adult Tobacco Survey saying they had used smokeless tobacco during the past 30 days.

On average, smokeless tobacco products deliver a higher dose of nicotine than cigarettes, making the product more habit forming, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "Smokeless tobacco is addictive just like cigarettes," said Jabari Sullen, manager of the Alabama Tobacco Quitline. "And tobacco companies are marketing these products to kids by packaging it just like candy and offering it in a variety of flavors, like apple and cherry."

Those who want to be *Through With Chew* can call the Quitline (1-800-Quit-Now) for free help to quit. The Quitline provides free coaching and an individualized plan to help tobacco users kick the habit. In addition, the Quitline offers eight weeks of free nicotine patches to those medically eligible who begin the coaching process. Quitline services are offered online at www.quitnowalabama.com.

For free help to be *Through With Chew*, call the Quitline at 800-784-8669.

2/22/16