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The Partnership celebrates 35th Great American Smokeout on November 18

Westminster, MD – (November 11, 2010) – Thursday, November 18 marks the 35th anniversary of the national *Great American Smokeout* (GASO). In 1971 a high school guidance counselor in Massachusetts named Arthur Mullaney organized a smoke-free day for his community, setting the stage for the GASO as we know it today. The idea of a smoke-free day took off, and in 1976, the California Division of the American Cancer Society got nearly one million smokers to put their cigarettes down for a day. The GASO went nationwide in 1977. Ever since, the third Thursday in November has been the day of the *Great American Smokeout*. Hosted by the American Cancer Society, the GASO challenges smokers to quit for this one day, and then take steps to kick smoking out of their lives permanently. Thousands of people have done just that, using the day to begin a new healthy, smoke-free lifestyle.

The Partnership asks smokers and non-smokers alike to observe the GASO on November 18. Anyone can participate in activities to encourage tobacco users who want to quit. The Partnership has invited our *Healthy Dining Partner* restaurants to feature a “cold turkey” special for the day, to display GASO materials, and to collect Tobacco-Free pledge cards from customers. Other local restaurants may call 410-871-6373 to participate and receive the free GASO handouts and pledge cards.

Things YOU can do to help:

Adopt a Quitter

The friends and family of smokers are always looking for a way to help those they care about to quit. The *Great American Smokeout* is the perfect time to put those who are quitting for the day in touch with a support system to help them through it.

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Trade In and Trade Up

For those who are quitting for the day, offer a trade-in for their smokes, chew, and lighters. Set up a station in recreation areas, dining facilities, and other central locations and provide sugar-free candy, sandwiches, popcorn, bottles of water, sunflower seeds, and other snacks.

Make Survival Kits

Quitting is no joke, even for just a day. Arm your GASO participants with Quit Kits to help them through the day. Include sugar-free gum, healthy snacks, and information about how to start quitting and get through those cravings.

Feed a Quitter

Most participants who are quitting for the day are going “cold turkey” — so why not reward them with cold turkey sandwiches?

Get the Word Out

Getting the word out about the GASO is crucial! You can help by using bulletin boards, marquees, public address systems, and regularly scheduled meetings to remind smokers of the approaching GASO. Visit <http://www.ucanquit2.org> for more free downloadable materials.

A Few Key Facts About Tobacco Use, courtesy of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control:

- Smoking is the main cause of at least 30% of all cancer deaths,
- Smoking harms nearly every organ of the body, causing many diseases and reducing the health of smokers in general.
- The list of diseases caused by tobacco use has been expanded to include abdominal aortic aneurysm, acute myeloid leukemia, cataract, cervical cancer, kidney cancer, pancreatic cancer, pneumonia, periodontitis, and stomach cancer. These are in addition to diseases previously known to be caused by tobacco use, including bladder, esophageal, laryngeal, lung, oral, and throat cancers, chronic lung diseases, coronary heart and cardiovascular diseases, as well as reproductive issues and sudden infant death syndrome.
- The Maryland Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey indicates that 13% of adults in Carroll County (an estimated 23,000 adults) still smoke cigarettes every day,
- Life expectancy for long-term smokers is approximately 14 years shorter than for nonsmokers,
- Quitting has immediate and long-term benefits for smokers AND for friends and family members who are exposed to second-hand smoke.

For more information about the *Great American Smokeout* and tips for tobacco-free living, visit www.Cancer.org.

For a list of local resources to help users quit tobacco, visit **Smoke-Free Carroll County** at www.HealthyCarroll.org.

The Partnership for a Healthier Carroll County, Inc., an affiliate of Carroll Hospital Center and the Carroll County Health Department, is a private nonprofit community-led organization that seeks to build capacity for both health and quality of life improvement.

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