



Cochise Health & Social Services

Mary Gomez, Director

"Building A Healthier Future"

*** MEDIA RELEASE ***

Contacts: Mary Gomez
Director
Email: mgomez@cochise.az.gov
Phone: 520-432-9404

Ray Falkenberg
Public Information Officer
Email: rfalkenberg@cochise.az.gov
Phone: 520-432-9414

Date: August 16, 2013

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: *Quitting Tobacco Will Soon Become Easier for Young Smokers in Cochise County*

New Program Targets Smokers in Their Teens and Early Twenties

Arizona has been a leader in tobacco control, and beginning August 26th, Cochise County will take another step forward. The CIGNAL is Arizona's newest effort to help young tobacco users quit tobacco for good.

The average age of initiation for smokers, meaning the first time they try a cigarette, is between 11 and 12. Ninety percent of current adult smokers are fully addicted by the time they reach age 19. Despite the small window of time between trying that first cigarette and becoming addicted, most tobacco cessation services are not aimed at young adults.

While there are traditional tobacco cessation classes for smokers, they have shown little to no impact on getting young adults to quit. They are often seen as a punishment. The CIGNAL seeks to provide a positive experience for young tobacco users ready to quit.

Modeled after and implemented by the highly successful Arizona Smokers' Helpline (ASHLine), the CIGNAL will use the same proven approach but will direct callers under the age of 23 to specially trained youth coaches. "The idea behind using youth quit coaches is simple," says ASHLine spokesman Stephen Michael. "We're using the same methodology as the ASHLine, but going at it in a way that the young smoker can relate to."

Notable challenges exist with reaching young tobacco users. In Arizona, seventeen percent of teens under the age of 18 use tobacco. Despite knowing the negative health effects, teens continue to try tobacco due to peer pressure or curiosity. "Our major challenge is relating to a group of young people who, while they smoke, do not consider themselves smokers," says Courtney Ward, Tobacco Office Chief at the Arizona Department of Health Services. "To reach them we had to come up with messaging that they can relate to."

A public service campaign that seeks to speak to young tobacco users through depictions of common phrases such as, "I only smoke when I'm at a party" or "I only smoke on the weekends" launched statewide on August 12th to promote the CIGNAL.

The CIGNAL is a free service and may be reached toll-free at 1-800-55-66-222. For callers under the age of 18, parental consent is not needed. Medications and other quit aids such as the patch, gum and lozenge will not be provide to anyone under 18. Teens interested in this method of quitting are encouraged to talk to their doctor. For more information, contact Suzanne Hagle at (520) 432-9493 or shagle@cochise.az.gov, or visit the CIGNAL website at www.theCIGNal.com

About Cochise Health and Social Services

Cochise Health and Social Services promotes health and quality of life for all Cochise County residents through education, service and leadership. For more information, please visit our website at <http://cochise.az.gov/health>.

#

Public Programs, Personal Service: www.cochise.az.gov

Email: health@cochise.az.gov

Main:	1415 Melody Lane, Bldg. A, Bisbee, AZ 85603	Phone: 520-432-9400	Fax: 520-432-9480
Benson:	126 W. 5 th Street, Benson, AZ 85602	Phone: 520-586-8200	Fax: 520-586-2051
Douglas:	1012 N. G. Avenue, Suite 101, Douglas, AZ 85607	Phone: 520-805-5600	Fax: 520-364-5453
Sierra Vista:	4115 E. Foothills Dr., Sierra Vista, AZ 85635	Phone: 520-803-3900	Fax: 520-459-8195
Willcox:	450 S. Haskell Ave., Willcox, AZ 85643	Phone: 520-384-7100	Fax: 520-384-0309