



Cochise Health & Social Services

Mary Gomez, Director

"Building A Healthier Future"

*** MEDIA RELEASE ***

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: COUNTY STUDENTS BATTLE AGAINST TOBACCO USE

Arizona Making Strides to Curb Tobacco Use Statewide
Student organization says there is a lot more work to be done

The fight to end tobacco is winning battles, but the war continues. In the last four years, the number of smokers under 18 dropped by 30 percent. Right now, about 14 percent of youth and 17 percent of adults use tobacco. Recent news about CVS stores deciding to stop carrying tobacco products on the heels of the 50th Anniversary of the Surgeon General's report on smoking inspires hope that tobacco use will soon be a memory.

"Not true," says Students Taking A New Direction, better known as [STAND](#). With more than 25 chapters located throughout Arizona, the anti-tobacco youth coalition is dedicated to establishing and improving health conditions in their communities. Many coalitions are working with local and tribal governments to pass smoke-free ordinances at local parks and expand smoke-free boundaries.

"We want everyone to be able to enjoy a healthy lifestyle," said Douglas High School Senior Jazlynn Lopez of the Cochise County Youth Health Coalition - STAND. "We're seeing fewer smokers, but we are still picking up a lot of cigarette butts in our parks. We still have a lot work to do."

STAND organized their first "legislative day" on Tuesday March 18th. More than 250 members gathered at the Arizona State Capitol to showcase their work. Many traveled to Phoenix to meet with their district senators and representatives to discuss local tobacco issues. The program included a formal presentation on the Senate Lawn. Guest speakers included former football player Ron Wolfley. STAND members discussed tobacco issues and how STAND is working to improve the health and wellness of their local cities and towns.

STAND was not alone as they partnered with the Arizona Attorney General's Counter Strike Program; Arizonans Concerned About Smoking; and the Arizona Chapters of the American Heart Association, American Lung Association, and American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network to showcase that tobacco remains an issue.

"Tobacco is the leading cause of death in Arizona," said Douglas High School Senior, Sarah Altamirano of Cochise County Youth Health Coalition - STAND. "It's not just lung cancer. It causes other health effects and can worsen existing health problems."

*** more ***

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About Students Taking A New Direction

STAND is a statewide coalition of students between the ages of 13 and 18 who work to raise awareness about the dangers of tobacco use and urge elected officials at all levels of government to treat cigarettes as hazardous materials -- including creating regulations for storage, transport, sale and disposal. Additional information may be found at StandAZ.com.

About Cochise Health and Social Services

On behalf of the Board of Supervisors, 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>. Recent media releases may be viewed at <http://cochise.az.gov/healthnews>.

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