

SCGOV HEALTHnews

Sarasota County Health Department | Florida Department of Health | scgov.net | 941.861.5000 | TV

Nov. 18, 2009

Media contact: Dianne Shipley, 941-861-2852; cell 941-302-1058;

Dianne_Shipley@doh.state.fl.us

Program contact: Crystal Bruce, 941-861-2876; cell 941-806-8452;

crystal_bruce@doh.state.fl.us

CORRECTION: The previous release contained an incorrect date for this event. The correct information is contained in this release.

Great American Smokeout goes to the beach

Thursday, Nov. 19, is the 34th annual Great American Smokeout. In recognition of the day, the Tobacco Free Partnership of Sarasota, the Sarasota Convention and Visitors Bureau and the American Lung Association will host a stop smoking event at the Siesta Beach pavilion 1-5 p.m.

"We are highlighting Sarasota County's smoke-free beaches and encouraging people to get out and enjoy the clean, fresh air," said Crystal Bruce, tobacco prevention specialist for Sarasota County. "It's going to be a great day at the beach with a free Frisbee disc and refreshments for everyone." The Sarasota County Health Department will offer free resource packets to anyone who wants to quit smoking.

Tobacco use remains the single largest preventable cause of disease and premature death in the United States, accounting for more than 430,000 deaths each year, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. In Florida, 28,000 adults die annually as a result of their own tobacco use, and the state spends more than \$6 billion in health-related costs attributed to smoking each year.

The goal of the Great American Smokeout, sponsored nationally by the American Cancer Society, is to encourage smokers to quit for a day with the hope that they will then quit for life.

For more information, contact the Sarasota County Call Center at 941-861-5000 and ask about the Great American Smokeout at Siesta Beach or visit the Web site www.tobaccofreeflorida.com.

-end-