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News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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We invite any media interested in interviewing our VA staff to learn more about care and services to contact our Public Affairs Officer at 989-497-2500, extension 13020 or e-mail tara.scheuer@va.gov

Aleda E. Lutz VA Medical Center encourages Veterans to leave smoking behind during yearly Great American Smokeout

Saginaw, Michigan — The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is encouraging Veterans to take the first step, Nov. 19, to stop smoking as part of the annual [Great American Smokeout](#) to improve their physical and mental health by combining cessation counseling with other VA clinical resources and support.

[Research](#) shows behavioral counseling can significantly improve one's chances of quitting and combining counseling and medication works better than medication or counseling alone.

"Many of our Veterans are looking for the "quick fix" of medications and nicotine-replacement treatments (NRTs) to assist with quitting his/her tobacco use. However, many are not taking into account the multiple years of tobacco use behaviors that have become ingrained in their lives, including strong connections to food, emotion, relaxation, and even driving. Those Veterans who engage in behavioral counseling, in conjunction with medications or NRTs, are seeing greater overall reductions in the amount of tobacco they are using and many to the point of quitting," stated Dr. Barbara Bates, Medical Center Director.

Those Veterans interested in exploring behavioral counseling to supplement medication or NRTs should reach out to Dr. Trevor Grice at 989-497-2500, extension 12454 for more information on how to begin the process of taking a multifaceted approach to quitting tobacco for good! Programming may include one-on-one telephone or video connect calls and participation in a Veteran support group focused on the difficulties of quitting and working with other Veterans exploring quitting as well.

VA's smoking counseling programs are one of the most effective tools available for Veterans who want to permanently stop smoking. VA health care providers can help Veterans explore the role tobacco plays in their daily routine, including the activities or situations that trigger someone to use tobacco products. These triggers can include talking on the phone, drinking coffee or alcohol or feeling bored or stressed. VA

providers work with Veterans to develop strategies for coping with those triggers and to tailor plans for quitting that will fit into each Veteran's everyday life.

In addition to counseling, VA provides other services designed to help Veterans stop smoking, including prescription medications, nicotine-replacement products like gum and patches and resources such as [Quit VET](#) and [SmokefreeVET](#).

For more information about tobacco cessation, visit www.mentalhealth.va.gov/quit-tobacco.

The Aleda E. Lutz VAMC in Saginaw, Michigan operates an 81-bed skilled nursing and rehabilitation Community Living Center. It provides care to over 37,400 Veterans in a 35-county geographic area, from mid-Michigan to the Mackinac Bridge. Veterans also receive care at one of our nine VA Community Based Outpatient Clinics located throughout Michigan. More information about this VA can be found at www.saginaw.va.gov.

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