



SOCIETY FOR PUBLIC HEALTH EDUCATION

10 G Street, Suite 605 • Washington, DC 20002-4242 • Phone 202/408-9804 • Fax 202/408-9815 • Website www.sophe.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 8, 2010

Contact: Laura Drouillard
(202)408-9804
ldrouillard@sophe.org

National Health Education Week 2010 Focuses on Nation Being Tobacco Free

Washington, DC. – In celebrating **National Health Education Week 2010 (NHEW)**, October 17-23, 2010, the Society for Public Health Education (SOPHE) will call attention to the importance of tobacco prevention, cessation, and control in improving the health of individuals and communities. Entitled *A Tobacco Free Nation through Health Education*, the week will engage health education specialists and advocates across the United States in implementing evidence-based tobacco control interventions and policies in states and communities.

To encourage awareness and action on smoking and health, SOPHE will host a webinar and offer an NHEW toolkit as well as other resources for 2010. The toolkit provides a comprehensive planning source for health professionals, community organizers, youth groups, and other organizations to help eliminate exposure to second-hand smoke, and to encourage those who use tobacco products to quit. “SOPHE encourages all those concerned about improving people’s health to adapt and personalize the ideas or tools in this guide to fit the needs of their local group or community,” states **Diane Allensworth**, PhD, SOPHE president.

Additionally, SOPHE will provide educational resources to help garner public, media and policymaker support for policies designed to reduce the burden of tobacco-related disease. All NHEW materials are available free of charge and are available at www.sophe.org/nhew.cfm.

Activities and resources will coincide with a different theme for each day of NHEW.

- *Monday: Tobacco Prevention at a Community Level*
- *Tuesday: Evidence-Based and Successful Approaches to Tobacco Control and Prevention*
- *Wednesday: Tobacco & Health Disparities*
- *Thursday: Preventing Tobacco Use among Youth*
- *Friday: Global Trends in Tobacco Adoption and Marketing*

According to CDC, the number of adult smokers dropped between 2000 and 2005, but smoking has leveled off at 20-21% since 2005. Moreover, nearly 90 million non-smoking Americans are exposed to secondhand smoke and have measureable levels of toxic chemicals from cigarette smoke.¹ CDC Director Dr. Thomas R. Frieden and other CDC leaders have identified tobacco as one of six “winnable battles” with large-scale impact on health and with known, effective strategies to intervene.

“SOPHE is proud to be working with the Department of Health and Human Services and national partners funded through the Communities Putting Prevention to Work initiative on tobacco prevention and control,” emphasizes **Elaine Auld**, MPH, CHES, chief executive officer of SOPHE. “We can improve the health of this nation by disseminating the latest evidence on policy, systems, and environmental changes that reduce tobacco exposure and catalyzing health education specialists to action.”

-more-

One of the most effective strategies to reduce the burden of tobacco is to prevent smoking initiation, especially among youth. According to the Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids, each day in the U.S. more than 1,000 kids become regular, daily smokers. “*Successful efforts to prevent kids from becoming smokers rely on a variety of evidence-based strategies,*” says Carol Azar, MPH, health education manager at Kaiser Permanents in Oakland, CA. “*These strategies include limiting access to tobacco products and partnering with local media to educate the community about the dangers of smoking and second hand smoke.*”

Health education specialists are often on the front line of tobacco prevention and control at the local level, bringing special knowledge and skills in behavioral modification and systems change theory. In the United States alone, approximately 400,000 deaths result from smoking annually.ⁱⁱ Additionally, tobacco-related illnesses cost the U.S. economy billions of dollars each year in lost productivity, hospitalization, and long-term disability.ⁱⁱⁱ

#####

About SOPHE

The Society for Public Health Education is a non-profit professional organization founded in 1950 to provide global leadership to the profession of health education and health promotion and to promote the health of society. Located in Washington, DC, SOPHE’s 4,000 National and chapter members advance health education theory and research, support excellence in health education practice, and promote public policies conducive to health. The Society publishes two scientific journals, *Health Education & Behavior* and *Health Promotion Practice*. For more information, go to www.sophe.org.

Available for Interviews. *The following spokespeople are available for interviews concerning National Health Education Week, smoking cessation, prevention & control efforts by health education specialists:*

M. Elaine Auld, MPH, CHES. Chief Executive Officer of the Society for Public Health Education since 1995. Ms. Auld directs the nation’s only independent organization devoted to public health education and health promotion. She oversees the Society’s portfolio of programs in professional development, research and advocacy on behalf of health education.

Carol Azar, MPH. As the Health Education Manager at Kaiser Permanente, in Oakland, CA, Ms. Azar oversees the patient education programs and services offered across the medical center, including the smoking cessation classes and initiatives. She previously worked with the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Bureau of Tobacco Control during the implementation of the NYC SmokeFree Air Act and in the Youth Tobacco prevention program. Miss Azar has been in the Health Education field for over 15 years and brings a wealth of knowledge and experience that she applies to her work on the SOPHE Board of Trustees as well as a part-time faculty member at San Jose State University.

ⁱ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Press Release: “Decline in US Adult Smoking Rate Stalled.” September 7, 2010.

ⁱⁱ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, “Annual Smoking-Attributable Mortality, Years of Potential Life Lost, and Productivity Losses—United States 2000-2004,” *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* (serial online) 57(45), November 14, 2008 (Accessed July 28, 2010)

ⁱⁱⁱ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Smoking Attributable Mortality, Years of Potential Life Lost, and Productivity Losses, United States 2000-2004. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* (serial online). 2008;57(45):1226-1228 (accessed 2010 July 28).