



## NEWS RELEASE

### ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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## **'Through With Chew Week' brings smokeless tobacco to the forefront**

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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The week of Feb. 15–21 has been designated as “Through With Chew Week” in an effort to call attention to the dangers of smokeless tobacco use. The public awareness campaign is designed to reduce the use of smokeless tobacco among young people.

“Smokeless tobacco is not a safe alternative to cigarettes, as some young people believe,” said Bret Stanfield, communication coordinator for the Alabama Department of Public Health Tobacco Prevention and Control Program. “In fact, it is even more habit-forming because it contains a higher concentration of nicotine than cigarettes.”

According to the 2014 Alabama Youth Tobacco Survey, 9.7 percent of Alabama’s high school students are current smokeless tobacco users. That figure is down from 12.6 percent in 2012. Nationally, 6.4 percent of high school students use smokeless tobacco.

“Smokeless tobacco can cause oral cancer, especially in the cheeks, gums and throat,” said Stanfield. “The use of smokeless tobacco can also lead to other oral problems, such as mouth sores, gum recession, tooth decay, bad breath and permanent discoloration of teeth.”

Stanfield also said that smokeless tobacco use can sometimes be seen as a rite of passage among young people in Alabama, typically males. Smokeless tobacco is also used as an alternative nicotine source as it emits no smoke and can be used more discretely than cigarettes and in places where smoking is not allowed.

Parents and teachers are encouraged to participate in Through With Chew Week by educating their children on the dangers of smokeless tobacco use.

In Alabama, resources are available to help residents quit smokeless tobacco. The Alabama Tobacco Quitline offers free help to anyone ready to quit tobacco use, or to anyone who wants more information about quitting. The Quitline offers free coaching, a personalized quit plan, and two weeks of free nicotine patches if enrolled in coaching and medically eligible.

For more information on the Alabama Tobacco Quitline, call 1-800-QUIT-NOW or visit [www.quitnowalabama.com](http://www.quitnowalabama.com).

For more information on “Through With Chew Week” activities in your area, contact your local health department or the ADPH Tobacco Prevention and Control Program at (334) 206-5030.

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