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Public Housing Going Smokefree: American Lung Association in Wisconsin to Offer FREE Quit Smoking Support to Residents

New initiative supported by the Anthem Foundation offers Lung Association's proven-effective Freedom From Smoking to help smokers quit

Note to media – Interviews are available with residents who have successfully quit smoking through this program along with program facilitators, American Lung Association in Wisconsin and Anthem Foundation staff.

Brookfield, WI (January 9, 2018) – In advance of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) smokefree housing rule requiring all public housing to be smokefree by July 31, 2018, the American Lung Association in Wisconsin, with support from the Anthem Foundation, will offer free quit smoking support for residents. Through the *Smoking Cessation for Low Income Housing Residents* initiative the Lung Association will work with Public Housing Agencies, the Milwaukee Health Department and other local partners to provide smokers wanting to quit free access to proven-effective tobacco cessation services such as Freedom From Smoking®.

"While we applaud the new smokefree policy to protect the thousands of Wisconsin's public housing residents from secondhand smoke, we also understand that quitting smoking can be difficult for those residents that smoke," said Keri Schneider of the American Lung Association in Wisconsin. "We are proud to partner with the Anthem Foundation and local organizations statewide to provide access to free quit smoking counseling and support – which is key to helping individuals overcome smoking addiction."

The Lung Association has completed several successful programs throughout SE Wisconsin and is scheduling others to begin in the near future. They also will train new facilitators who are interested in offering the program on-site for residents. For scheduling information, please contact Keri Schneider at 262-703-4852, or 1-800-LUNG-USA.

Every year in Wisconsin, more than 7,000 people die from tobacco use and exposure to secondhand smoke, making it the leading cause of preventable death in this country. Smoking can cause or worsen numerous diseases and conditions, including lung cancer, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), heart disease and more. The nicotine in tobacco is highly addictive, which is part of why it can be so tough to quit smoking. On average, it takes a tobacco user eight to 11 quit attempts before they are smokefree for good.

“Smoking is the leading cause of preventable death and disease in the United States. More than 70% of smokers want to quit but just don’t know how to start that process,” said Dr. Anthony Otters, Medical Director, Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield Medicaid in Wisconsin. “We are proud to team with the American Lung Association to offer guidance and support that will help people throughout Wisconsin to quit smoking, improve lung health and help prevent tobacco-related illnesses.”

The American Lung Association is working with community partners throughout Wisconsin to bring proven-effective tobacco cessation programs such as Freedom From Smoking® which has helped over one million smokers quit. The Lung Association’s quit smoking program is offered in person, online and by phone and includes content on building a quit plan, medications that can aid quitting smoking, lifestyle changes that support quitting smoking, how to manage stress and how to overcome relapse and become smokefree for good.

To learn more about how to quit smoking, call the Lung Association’s toll-free Lung Helpline 1-800-LUNGUSA, or learn more about [Freedom From Smoking®](#) at Lung.org/ffs.

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About the American Lung Association

The American Lung Association is the leading organization working to save lives by improving lung health and preventing lung disease, through research, education and advocacy. The work of the American Lung Association is focused on four strategic imperatives: to defeat lung cancer; to improve the air we breathe; to reduce the burden of lung disease on individuals and their families; and to eliminate tobacco use and tobacco-related diseases. For more information about the American Lung Association, a holder of the Better Business Bureau Wise Giving Guide Seal, or to support the work it does, call 1-800-LUNGUSA (1-800-586-4872) or visit: Lung.org.

About Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield Foundation

Through charitable grant making, the Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield Foundation LLC, an independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association, promotes Anthem’s inherent commitment to enhance the health and well-being of individuals and families in communities that Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield serves. The Foundation focuses its funding on strategic initiatives that address and provide innovative solutions to health care challenges, as well as promoting the Healthy Generations Program, a multi-generational initiative that targets specific disease states and medical conditions. These include: prenatal care in the first trimester, low birth weight babies, cardiac morbidity rates, long term activities that decrease obesity and increase physical activity, diabetes prevalence in adult populations, adult pneumococcal and influenza vaccinations and smoking cessation. The Foundation also coordinates the company’s Associate Giving program which provides a 50 percent match of associates’ campaign pledges, as well as its Volunteer Time Off and Dollars for Doers community service programs. ®ANTHEM is a registered trademark of Anthem Insurance Companies, Inc. The Blue Cross and Blue Shield names and symbols are registered marks of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association.

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