

# Teamwork for Better Health:

## A Tobacco Free Partnership

PAID PROMOTIONAL FEATURE

Since 2008, Tobacco Free Florida has united the area's residents and community groups in its mission to promote tobacco-free social norms: "prevent usage of tobacco products by youth/young adults, encourage and support tobacco cessation, eliminate the hazards of secondhand smoke, and decrease the number of deaths due to tobacco products."

That mission is especially important these days. The risk of invasive pneumococcal lung disease,

often a byproduct of coronavirus, is two to four times higher in smokers. The World Health Organization found that among Chinese patients diagnosed with COVID-19 associated pneumonia, those who smoked were 14 times as likely to have their disease worsen, including fatally.

Waterpipe use also poses a high risk of transmitting coronavirus. Multiple people can use the same mouthpiece. Even if they don't, smokers often cough into hoses, where the virus can live.

If ever there was a time to quit tobacco, this is it.

Tobacco Free Florida and the QuitDoc Foundation promotes local events and observances like Tobacco Free Florida Week, World No Tobacco Day, the Great American Smokeout, and Not A Lab Rat Day, spearheaded by Students Working Against Tobacco (SWAT).

Robert Boissoneault Oncology Institute is a valued teammate supporting Tobacco Free Florida initiatives. "They have been a really great avenue for getting the word out about all the different tobacco observances," says Facilitator and Community Health Advocate Lauren Fischer in Marion County, who has spoken at RBOI events. "The Tobacco Free Partnership is all about policy and RBOI is an integral part, bringing new ideas and new partners to the table."

Those partners include workplaces, retailers, and housing complexes. For example, tobacco-free policies in multi-unit housing address issues of secondhand smoke and fire risk because smoke can travel beyond

individual units and common areas. Tobacco-free policies have also been enacted this year by community events, such as the Glow with the Flow 5k, the Fall Feast, The World's Greatest Baby Shower, the Strawberry Festival, and Fine Arts For Ocala.

Before the coronavirus, Tobacco Free Florida practiced most of its education and outreach person to person. Now it holds webinars on topics like tactics used by e-cigarette brands to target young adults, and ways to recognize vulnerable populations in rural communities. Outreach also includes snail mail, email blasts, and expanded use of social media platforms like Facebook. They also connect smokers who want to quit with virtual tobacco cessation programs. The Sea Cadets and SWAT clubs have continued several after-school programs, meeting in smaller groups during the pandemic.

To learn more about the Tobacco Free of Florida, go to [tobaccofreeflorida.com](http://tobaccofreeflorida.com) or call toll-free at (877) 822-6669 or 352-359-5383 locally.



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**\$1 Billion**

Money spent by the tobacco industry to market its products in Florida alone

**10%**

Tobacco-related deaths due to secondhand smoke

**9 out of 10**

Smokers who start their habit by age 18

**#1**

Smoking is the number one cause of preventable home fire deaths



## Coming in October: Not A Lab Rat Day

This October, Students Working Against Tobacco (SWAT) will hold its third "Not A Lab Rat Day," a series of events across Florida to dispel myths and educate the public about the e-cigarette industry's connection to Big Tobacco. "There's so much that we don't know about the health effects of e-cigarettes," they point out, adding that tobacco companies "are using our generation as an experiment for their new nicotine-packed products." To learn more, go to [swatflorida.com](http://swatflorida.com).

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