



Rick Scott
Governor

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Jennifer Smith, 252-2672

For Spanish: Paula DiGrigoli, 252-5361

**Students Working Against Tobacco(SWAT) Awareness of
Candy-Flavored Tobacco Products**

Kick Butts Day 2011 is March 23, 2011

Collier County, Fla.— SWAT and Tobacco Free Florida are joining the fight against candy-flavored tobacco products as part of Kick Butts Day 2011, a national day of activism that empowers youth to speak up and take action against Big Tobacco.

Studies of youth expectations around flavored tobacco products, like bidis and hookahs, have found that young smokers report choosing flavored products over cigarettes because they “taste better” and are perceived to be “safer.” In observance of Kick Butts Day on March 23, SWAT wants community members to know the truth about candy-flavored tobacco products – that they are as addictive and carry similar health risks as regular tobacco products.

“We know that the tobacco industry is spending a lot to advertise these candy-flavored products that we see at convenience stores around our schools and in our neighborhoods,” said Jennifer Smith, SWAT Coordinator at The Collier County Health Department. “We want to inform kids and parents these products are just as dangerous and addictive as cigarettes.” **According to the Florida Youth Tobacco Survey completed in 2010, 10.2% of Collier County high school students and 3.1% of middle school students currently smoke candy- flavored cigars.**

SWAT youth will be at the Sun N Fun Lagoon on Friday March 25th from 10am-1pm educating about the dangers of tobacco, cessation options and the current Statewide Campaign to ban the sale of candy flavored tobacco products.

In September 2009, an FDA ban on flavored cigarettes went into effect under the Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act. Menthol cigarettes and flavored tobacco products other than cigarettes were exempt; although, the FDA is currently examining options to regulate these products.

“Parents need to be aware of how common the use of candy-flavored tobacco products is among young people, and should talk to their kids about the dangers of trying these products. Candy and fruit flavors mask the bad taste of tobacco, making it easier for kids to start using tobacco products. Once they start using one tobacco product, however, they are more likely to experiment with others” explained Jennifer Smith.

Tobacco Free Florida offers a number of free resources to help smokeless tobacco users quit. ALL options include FREE (NRT) Nicotine Replacement Therapy: gum, patches, and lozenges.

- Phone: Call the Florida Quitline at 1-877-U-CAN-NOW to speak with a Quit Coach who will help assess the user’s addiction and create a personalized quit plan.
- Online: Enroll in online counseling with the Florida Quitline, where each user can create a personalized, web-based quit plan. Visit <https://www.quitnow.net/florida> to enroll.
- In-person: Quit-Smoking Now Class. 6-session smoking cessation program in a group setting to facilitate the cessation process by providing the information and tools to become tobacco free. To learn more about the class or register call Elieso Rangel at 239-989-9809

###