

CITY OF BALTIMORE

MAYOR STEPHANIE RAWLINGS-BLAKE



HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Olivia D. Farrow, Esq., R.S.

Interim Commissioner

1001 E. Fayette Street

Baltimore, MD 21202

<http://www.baltimorehealth.org>

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MEDIA CONTACT: Brian Schleiter

PHONE: 443-984-2623

Mediahealth@baltimorecity.gov

Tobacco Marketing, Smoke Still a Threat to Baltimore Women World No Tobacco Day is May 31st, 2010

BALTIMORE, MD (May 28, 2010) – This year’s World No Tobacco Day is focused on the issue of tobacco marketing geared towards women, but also serves as an opportunity to raise awareness about the effects of smoking among women in Baltimore City and Maryland.

The tobacco industry has long understood the importance of targeting women and young girls in the overall cigarette market and as a source of new customers. The industry’s worldwide marketing research is focused on how women view themselves, their aspirations, and the social pressures they face, allowing cigarette companies to develop aggressive and sophisticated marketing campaigns to reach and influence them. The consequences of campaigns promoting a link between smoking and independence, stylishness, weight control, sophistication and power have been staggering. More than 178,000 women in the United States die each year from smoking-related diseases.

“Recognizing the importance of cigarette marketing towards women and reducing tobacco use among them can save lives,” said Interim Commissioner Olivia D. Farrow.

In the United States, 21% of women (1 in 5) are smokers. According to 2008 statistics from the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH), 14% of Maryland women reported smoking cigarettes during the past month. Smoking was most prevalent among women ages 18-44 (15% smoked) and 45-64 (16% smoked). It was lowest among women 65 years of age and older (8% smoked). Smoking was most prevalent among Black and White women (15% smoked) and least among Hispanic women (3% smoked). In Baltimore City, the [2009 Baltimore City Community Health Survey](#) reported that, of the women surveyed, 22.8% smoked¹.

Despite recent declines in smoking and tobacco-related diseases across the board, tobacco-related diseases still exercise a strong hold over Baltimore women. The DHMH 2009 Cancer Report stated that 1,123 Baltimore City women died of lung or bronchus cancer and 7 died of oral cancer in 2006. The American Legacy Foundation reported that women who smoke are more than twice as likely to have heart attacks than non-smoking women. They are also at increased risk for infertility, spontaneous abortion and stillbirth. Children who are exposed to second-hand smoke are at increased risk of dying from Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) or developing respiratory disease.

¹ Confidence interval of 19.2-26.9

In an on-going effort to raise awareness about the dangers of smoking, the Baltimore City Health Department has been reaching out to schools and community groups by means of its tobacco education bus, which served 47,524 people in 2009. To reserve the bus, or to find other resources on smoking and smoking cessation, visit <http://baltimorehealth.org/cessation>.

###