



# Health and Human Services MEDIA RELEASE



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

April 16, 2015

## MEDIA ADVISORY

# Students Working Against Tobacco (SWAT) Members Recognize Earth Day

*Local Students Host Beach Clean-Up at Siesta Key*

SARASOTA COUNTY — In recognition of Earth Day, Students Working Against Tobacco (SWAT) members will walk Siesta Key Beach picking up litter from cigarettes and other tobacco products on Saturday, April 18, from 9:30 -11:30 a.m. The Sarasota County chapter of SWAT will host this third annual event and has invited other SWAT chapters from nearby counties to participate.

“Tobacco use not only causes diseases like lung cancer, but it also hurts our environment,” said Pine View SWAT student Jonah Mundy. “Cleaning up the beach makes our community a nicer place to live and counteracts the negative impact tobacco has on our environment.”

According to the Keep America Beautiful website, tobacco litter represents about 32 percent of all litter in outdoor recreation areas. Cigarette butts and the remnants of tobacco products contain hundreds of toxic chemicals that can leach into waterways or be ingested by wildlife.



SWAT Youth picking up cigarette litter at last beach clean-up event.

“Cigarettes are the most littered item in the U.S. and around the world. Our SWAT youth are working in the community to raise awareness concerning the impact tobacco use has on our health and well-being as well as the environment,” said Florida Department of Health in Sarasota County (DOH-Sarasota) Students Working Against Tobacco Coordinator Hilary Woodcum.

Additionally, Tobacco Free Florida Week will be observed April 26- May 2. This year’s theme of “Quit and Tell” celebrates those who have quit using tobacco and encourages them to share their stories.

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### **MEDIA NOTES:**

#### **DOH-Sarasota Media Contact:**

Dianne Shipley, 941-861-2852; cell 941-302-1058; DOHSarasotaNews@flhealth.gov

Website: [www.sarasotahealth.org](http://www.sarasotahealth.org)



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## **ABOUT TOBACCO FREE FLORIDA**

The Department's Tobacco Free Florida campaign is a statewide cessation and prevention campaign funded by Florida's tobacco settlement fund. Tobacco users interested in quitting are encouraged to use one of the state's three ways to quit. Since 2007, more than 126,140 Floridians have successfully quit, using one of these free services. To learn more about Tobacco Free Florida and the state's free quit resources, visit [www.tobaccofreeflorida.com](http://www.tobaccofreeflorida.com) or follow the campaign on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/TobaccoFreeFlorida](http://www.facebook.com/TobaccoFreeFlorida) or on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/tobaccofreefla](http://www.twitter.com/tobaccofreefla).

DOH-Sarasota is part of the statewide network of county health departments working to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

For more information about Sarasota County's Tobacco Prevention Program, or to learn ways to get involved please visit <http://sarasota.floridahealth.gov/programs-and-services/wellness-programs/tobacco-prevention/index.html> or call 941-861-2805.

Sarasota County prohibits discrimination in all services, programs or activities.  
View the complete policy at [www.scgov.net/ADA/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.scgov.net/ADA/Pages/default.aspx)

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### **MEDIA NOTES:**

*This is the third annual SWAT Beach Clean-up event. Nearly two dozen youth have participated in the past. This year's event is open to SWAT clubs in neighboring counties.*

#### **DOH-Sarasota Media Contact:**

[Hilary Woodcum, 941-861-2997; cell: 941-228-1566; Hilary.Woodcum@FLHealth.gov](mailto:Hilary.Woodcum@FLHealth.gov)

Website: [www.sarasotahealth.org](http://www.sarasotahealth.org)



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