



LEWIS & CLARK CITY-COUNTY  
**Health Department**

1930 Ninth Avenue  
Helena, MT 59601  
PH: 406.4HEALTH or 406.443.2584  
Fax: 406.457.8990

**For immediate release**

**Feb. 15, 2013**

**Contact:** Gayle Shirley, Communications Coordinator, 406-457-8908, gshirley@lccountymt.gov

## **‘Through with Chew Week’ Emphasizes Harm of All Tobacco Products**

The Lewis and Clark City-County Health Department will join others around the nation in promoting “Through with Chew Week” Feb. 17-23.

“As the harmful effects of smoking continue to get national attention, tobacco companies have shifted their focus to smokeless tobacco products, claiming that they’re safe alternatives to cigarettes,” said Brett Christian, health educator with the health department. “This week’s observance reminds us that there’s no such thing as a safe tobacco product.”

Tobacco companies have long targeted Montanans with marketing that emphasizes rural Western values and independence. Increasingly, the companies are shifting their marketing to appeal to a younger audience – including teens – by offering trendy product flavorings and package designs.

“But no amount of fruit flavor or fancy marketing can alter the harmful effects of smokeless products,” Christian said. “Smokeless tobacco is re-emerging as a dangerous threat to the collective health and wellness of Montanans.”

In the past, he added, smokeless products were considered a niche market. But with increased FDA oversight on cigarettes, tobacco companies have escalated efforts to convince smokers to use smokeless tobacco when and where smoking isn’t allowed. Research shows that people who use both cigarettes and smokeless products have an extremely difficult time trying to quit either.

Smokeless products can deliver a dose of nicotine equal to that of two cigarettes, Christian said. Meanwhile, smoking and smokeless tobacco account for an estimated 80 percent of all oral cancer, as well as taking a role in heart disease, high blood pressure, and stroke. Research conducted by the American Cancer Society indicated that men who switched from cigarettes to snuff or chewing tobacco had higher death rates than former smokers who stopped using all tobacco products.

To mark “Through with Chew Week,” local health advocates from three counties will sponsor a free public screening of the award-winning documentary “Addiction Incorporated” on Thursday at 7 p.m, at

*The mission of the Lewis and Clark City-County Health Department is to improve and protect the health of all Lewis and Clark County residents.*

the Myrna Loy Center, 15 N. Ewing. The film focuses on the scientist who in the 1980s revealed the lies the tobacco industry told about whether tobacco is addictive.

Smokeless tobacco users are encouraged to celebrate “Through with Chew Week” by quitting. The Montana Tobacco Quit Line, 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669), offers free support, including coaching, nicotine replacement therapies, and discounts on prescription medications that help with quitting.

*The mission of the Lewis and Clark City-County Health Department is to improve and protect the health of all Lewis and Clark County residents.*