

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: István Fazekas
Public Information Officer
Phone: (209) 468-8584
Email: ifazekas@sjcphs.org

San Joaquin County Smoke-Free Outdoor Spaces Town Hall Meeting: January 18, 2023

(January 11, 2024) – San Joaquin County Public Health Services, The Coalition for Tobacco-Free San Joaquin, and Bay Area Community Resources (BACR) will be hosting a Smoke-Free Outdoor Spaces Town Hall event on Thursday, January 18, from 5-7pm. The event is free-of-charge, open to the public, and will be held in the Rick Cromwell Community Room at the Lodi Police Department, 215 West Elm Street, Lodi, CA. Dinner will start at 5pm, for everyone who registered.

Lodi Chief of Police Ricardo Garcia, Lodi City Council Member Cameron Bregman, and keynote speaker Dr. Bonnie Halpern-Felsher will be in attendance. Dr. Halpern-Felsher, founder and director of the Stanford REACH lab, is a developmental psychologist whose research focuses on understanding and reducing tobacco use among adolescents and young adults. She is also the founder and director of the Tobacco Prevention Toolkit, an online curriculum aimed at reducing and preventing youth tobacco use. Dr. Halpern-Felsher's research and committee work have been instrumental in setting policy at the local, state, and national level.

There will be presentations from youth groups that focus on educating peers and decreasing tobacco use among youth, including Youth Advocacy Against Tobacco (YAAT) and Students Mobilizing Others Out of Tobacco Habits (SMOOTH).

San Joaquin County reports a higher rate of adult smokers (14%) to the California average (9%). This high rate of smoking is a concern not only for smokers but also for non-smokers because the exposure to secondhand smoke can trigger an inflammatory reaction in the body and increase the risk of heart disease, lung cancer, and premature death.

In addition to the overt health risks, there are environmental detriments caused by tobacco use. Cigarette butts are a common toxic waste product found on sidewalks, parks, and other public places. They contain chemicals that are toxic to children and animals including formaldehyde, nicotine, arsenic, and lead.

In 2022, the Smoking and Tobacco Outreach/ Prevention Program (STOPP) conducted a park and sidewalk observation in San Joaquin County which found an average of 16.9 tobacco waste product pieces around public picnic areas, including cigarette butts, vapes, and wrappers/boxes.

RSVP for the town hall event is highly encouraged at:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/YLXST3J>

For resources and more information visit: https://www.sicphs.org/healthed/stopp_services.aspx