



MISSOURI ACADEMY OF  
FAMILY PHYSICIANS



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## **Anti-Tobacco Program Targets Local Elementary Schools**

The Missouri Academy of Family Physicians, Family Health Foundation of Missouri (FHFM) and the Central Missouri Council for Drug Free Youth have partnered to educate 3<sup>rd</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> grade students about the harmful effects of tobacco and e-cigarettes. This partnership is the result of a mini-grant from the American Academy of Family Physicians Foundation, but also the blending of complementary programs offered by each organization.

The Council for Drug Free Youth (CDFY) is a mid-Missouri coalition that educates our community on the challenges and consequences of drugs and other unhealthy life choices of our youth. CDFY starts promoting anti-tobacco usage to 3<sup>rd</sup> graders while the FHFM Tar Wars poster contest focuses on 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders. In addition, the CDFY programs continue with other substance abuse issues in junior and high school. Joy Sweeney, CDFY executive director stated, “We need to reach our youth and teach them about the long-term harmful effects of tobacco, especially e-cigarettes which are marketed in a variety of flavors that are attractive to youth.”

Elementary students participate in a presentation that includes a hands-on experiment of breathing through a straw to experience the long-term effects of smoking. Students in the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grades are also encouraged to participate in a statewide anti-tobacco Tar Wars poster contest where they could win prizes ranging from \$25 - \$100. The winner will also be recognized at the Missouri Academy of Family Physicians Awards and Installation dinner in June. “This positive program is important to help our youth make healthy choices and support each other to be tobacco free,” stated Kathy Pabst, MAFP Executive Director.

Research shows that the number of youth using tobacco in 12<sup>th</sup> grade is seven times those in 6<sup>th</sup> grade. This program reaches Missouri youth earlier than 6<sup>th</sup> grade in order to educate and deter them from starting tobacco use before it becomes a habit. Because it is often difficult to stop smoking, preventing youth from ever starting to use tobacco and vapor products is key to reducing their use in Missourians of all ages.

**About the Council for Drug-Free Youth (CDFY)**

Council for Drug-Free Youth is a community coalition that began in 1983 as an active group of concerned parents seeking to fight the problem of alcohol and other drugs among youth. The desire of the coalition is to inform and educate our community of the challenges and consequences of drugs and other unhealthy life choices of our youth. CDFY works with community partners to provide inclusive activities that support youth and show them that an alcohol and drug-free life is not only possible, but fulfilling. CDFY empowers youth to stand up and support one another, to live healthy and drug free!

**About the Missouri Academy of Family Physicians (MAFP)**

Founded in 1947, the MAFP is a non-profit professional medical society of more than 2,400 physicians, residents and medical students across the state. Nearly one in four office visits are made to family physicians. That is 213 million visits annually - nearly 74 million more than the next specialty (CDC, 2010). Today, family physicians provide more care for America’s underserved and rural populations than any other medical specialty. Headquartered in Jefferson City, the MAFP is dedicated to optimizing the health of patients, families, and communities of Missouri through patient care, advocacy, education, and research. The MAFP is a constituent chapter of the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP).

For photo/video opportunities, future Tar/Wars anti-tobacco presentations will be held on:

**Tuesday, February 23, 2016**

- 9:30 a.m. - St. Martins School
- 10:30 a.m. - South Elementary School
- 2:00 p.m. - Lawson Elementary School
- 3:00 p.m. - Cedar Hill Elementary School

**Wednesday, February 24, 2016**

- 9:30 a.m. - West Elementary School
- 10:30 a.m. - St. Joseph School
- 1:15 p.m. - Immaculate Conception School
- 2:15 p.m. - East Elementary School

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