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MIDDLE SCHOOL CURRICULUM RESPONDS TO CALL-TO-ACTION IN NEW U.S. SURGEON GENERAL REPORT ON HAZARDS OF YOUTH E-CIGARETTE USE
State Education and Health Agencies Opting to Make 'CATCH My Breath' E-Cigarette Prevention Program Available to Their Middle Schools

AUSTIN, TX – The new U.S. Surgeon General's report, ***E-Cigarette Use Among Youth and Young Adults***, released today, warns E-cigarettes are much more harmful than many realize and recommends adopting evidence-based health strategies to educate young people.

The lack of existing, focused curriculum for youth E-cigarette prevention is what led one of the senior scientific editors of today's Surgeon General's report, Steven H. Kelder, PhD, MPH, to write the CATCH My Breath program. Kelder collaborated with other researchers at the Michael & Susan Dell Center for Healthy Living that he co-directs at The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston (UTHealth) School of Public Health. CATCH My Breath is distributed by the CATCH Global Foundation, a 501(c)3 public charity dedicated to improving children's health worldwide.

Earlier this year, 26 middle schools in 5 states participated in a feasibility study of CATCH My Breath which delivered the program to 2,200 sixth- to eighth-graders. At the conclusion of the study, 7 of 8 students surveyed reported that they were less likely to use E-cigarettes because of the program.

Currently, 56 middle schools across eleven states are implementing the CATCH My Breath program. States include Arkansas, Illinois, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Montana, Mississippi, North Carolina, New Hampshire, Oklahoma, Tennessee, and Texas. Several concerned organizations around the country have decided to offer CATCH My Breath free of charge to schools in their area. These include:

- Montana Middle schools (sponsored by Montana Office of Public Instruction)
- Central Texas (sponsored by the St. David's Foundation)
- Various county health departments in North Carolina

"We're pleased to make the Catch My Breath curriculum available to Montana middle schools," said Denise Juneau, Montana Superintendent of Public Instruction. "We think it will be a great resource for teachers and a program that our middle school students will benefit from."

"Because their brains are growing rapidly, youth and young adults are vulnerable to the harmful brain consequences of nicotine," Kelder said. "Clearly, the E-cigarette issue is different for adults than for kids. I'm fearful that the epidemic of E-cigarette use is going to cause another generation of youth to needlessly become addicted to nicotine, and they will eventually go on to become regular cigarette smokers."

The CATCH My Breath program aligns closely with key recommendations of the newly released report by the U.S. Surgeon General. These recommendations include "the adoption of public

health strategies that are precautionary to protect youth and young adults from adverse effects related to e-cigarettes,” “diverse actions, modeled after evidence-based tobacco control strategies, can be taken at the state, local, tribal, and territorial levels to address e-cigarette use among youth and young adults” and “a broad program of behavioral, communications, and educational research is crucial to assess how youth perceive e-cigarettes and associated marketing messages, and to determine what kinds of tobacco control communication strategies and channels are most effective.”

“CATCH My Breath clarified how E-cigarettes work and the chemicals in them, and it was helpful to me because I didn't know too much about them,” said Lisa Cumings, R.N., CATCH trainer and community health liaison for Kishwaukee Hospital in DeKalb County, Illinois. “It also gave the kids a chance to explore reasons why people start using E-cigarettes in the first place and to identify other things to do besides smoke.”

E-cigarette use among American youth rose nearly 22 percent in the last year measured. Three million middle and high school students were current users of E-cigarettes in 2015 — up from 2.46 million in 2014, according to data from the 2015 National Youth Tobacco Survey, published by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

CATCH My Breath is designed to help prevent the initiation of E-cigarette use among pre-teens and teens. It educates students on the health consequences of using E-cigarettes, increases their awareness of deceptive advertising campaigns and gives them the tools to resist peer pressure in a socially acceptable manner.

“For months, health authorities around the country have been sounding the alarm about the epidemic of youth E-cigarette use in their communities,” said Duncan Van Dusen, Executive Director at the Austin-based CATCH Global Foundation. “We are pleased that so many of them have already selected CATCH My Breath as a vital prevention tool, and that the Surgeon General has now raised this public health issue to national attention.”

As founding partners of the CATCH Global Foundation, UTHealth and the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center support distribution of CATCH My Breath to middle schools around the country.

Interested health departments, community-based organizations, and schools nationwide can contact ecigs@catchglobalfoundation.org or visit <http://www.catchmybreath.org> for more information about the CATCH My Breath Youth E-Cigarette Prevention Program. A program sample is available free of charge at <http://www.digitalcatch.org>

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About the CATCH Global Foundation

The CATCH Global Foundation is a 501(c)3 public charity founded in 2014. Our mission is to improve children's health worldwide by developing, disseminating and sustaining the CATCH platform in collaboration with researchers at UTHealth and The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center. The foundation links underserved schools and communities to the resources necessary to create and sustain healthy change for future generations. The founding partners of the CATCH Global Foundation are MD Anderson Cancer Center, the Michael & Susan Dell Foundation, the RGK Foundation and UTHealth.