



**COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO HEALTH AGENCY
PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: March 20, 2018
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Students Speak Up Against Tobacco in "Kick Butts Day" Events Countywide
Flash mobs, photo booths, and school events elevate youth voice in tobacco dialogue

San Luis Obispo — With events at six San Luis Obispo County middle schools on March 21, young people are dancing, filming, taking action and speaking up about the impact of tobacco marketing on their generation. The events are part of "Kick Butts Day," a national youth-led celebration of student leadership and activism against tobacco use.

"The power of this day is in the strong voices of young people saying they won't be controlled by tobacco," said Inger Appanaitis, program manager for tobacco control for the County of San Luis Obispo. "The tobacco industry continually evolves to appeal to young people in different ways. Today, we're hearing youth say they're not falling for it. Our hope for these students is that they become the first generation to live free of tobacco—and that all the adults in our community support them in achieving that freedom."

The events are supported by the County of San Luis Obispo Tobacco Control program and Friday Night Live, in coordination with each school. Participating schools include Atascadero, Flamson, Laguna, Lewis, Los Osos, and Mesa Middle Schools.

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Media Opportunity

- When: March 21, 2018, 11:50 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
- Where: Mesa Middle School, 2555 S. Halcyon Road in Arroyo Grande
- What: Choreographed student "flash mob" and interview opportunities
- Who: Students, teachers and tobacco prevention advocates

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According to the 2015–2016 California Healthy Kids Survey, 19 percent of San Luis Obispo eleventh graders had ever smoked a whole cigarette, a decrease from 36 percent in 2007–09. However, 39 percent had ever used e-cigarettes or other vaping device. These trends show that while cigarette use continues to decline, e-cigarettes pose an increased risk to young people's health.

The [County of San Luis Obispo Tobacco Control program](#) offers support and resources—including free Quit Smoking classes, group support, and nicotine replacement—for residents year-round. It also supports students through school-based initiatives.

[Friday Night Live](#) (FNL) is a place for young people to come together and make positive changes in their schools and communities. In SLO County, each middle and high school has a chapter of FNL.

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