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## NEWS RELEASE

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### **North Dakota Department of Health Records Significant Decline in Rate of Pregnant Women Smoking**

BISMARCK, N.D. – Fewer pregnant women in North Dakota are smoking compared to 2015, according to the North Dakota Department of Health’s birth certificate records. In August, North Dakota reported the 2016 statewide pregnancy smoking rate at 11.6 percent, down from 13.8 percent the year prior. At its lowest point yet, the state has seen consistent declines over the last decade in the number of pregnant women smoking. The rate is trending toward the national pregnancy smoking rate of 8.4 percent, reported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

“The dramatic difference in pregnancy smoking rates from 2015 to 2016 shows North Dakota’s commitment to helping people break their addiction to nicotine and enjoy tobacco-free lives,” said Neil Charvat, tobacco prevention and control program director for the State of North Dakota. “This is the most significant improvement in the year-to-year pregnancy smoking rate in the last ten years. We’re thrilled to see more mothers making healthy choices for their future children.”

The North Dakota Department of Health (NDDoH) says more than a quarter of the North Dakota women (26.6%) who say they smoked in the first trimester of pregnancy quit by the third trimester. North Dakota women who are pregnant and need assistance quitting tobacco can find help through North Dakota’s BABY & ME – Tobacco Free™, a program that provides personalized educational and support sessions during pregnancy and monthly postnatal visits. More women are enrolling in the BABY & ME program as North Dakota’s pregnancy smoking rate is trending down.

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“Our mission is to reduce the burden of tobacco on our society,” Alison Harrington, certified tobacco treatment specialist and respiratory therapy care manager at CHI St. Alexius Medical Center, says. “We are taking action to help mothers quit smoking by providing counseling and resources to live tobacco-free lives during their pregnancy and after their babies are born.”

Women who test tobacco-free at BABY & ME visits even receive \$50 diaper vouchers as an additional reward to the healthy improvements they are making for their families. The NDDoH reports 75 percent of enrollees were abstinent from tobacco at one or more prenatal sessions. Enrollment in the program is available at hospitals throughout the state. For more information on the program, visit [www.babyandmetobaccofree.org](http://www.babyandmetobaccofree.org).

For more information on the resources and information available to help North Dakotans quit tobacco, contact NDQuits, or visit [www.ndhealth.gov/ndquits](http://www.ndhealth.gov/ndquits).

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