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Attorneys General Zoeller, Madigan Team Up to End Youth Smoking

INDIANAPOLIS – Indiana Attorney General Greg Zoeller and Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan are teaming up to help end youth smoking, as part of a bold new national youth smoking prevention effort.

The two leaders are working with Legacy®, the public health foundation that works to prevent youth smoking through its nationally recognized, proven-effective **truth**® youth smoking prevention campaign. With advertisements already on air, **truth's** new "Finish It" campaign asks young people to be the generation that finally ends the tobacco epidemic – an epidemic that costs 480,000 American lives each year due to tobacco-related diseases, while also costing our economy millions and taking a serious toll on our families and communities.

Zoeller and Madigan joined health experts and teen advocates today at the Illinois Poison Center in Chicago to bring awareness to this issue.

"For decades, we have been fighting tobacco use – especially among young people – in order to reduce addictions and save lives," Zoeller said. Smoking rates have dropped dramatically since we learned of the dangers associated with tobacco, but thousands of our youth continue to get hooked year after year. Now is the time to 'Finish It' and end teen smoking for good."

Zoeller was recently appointed to Legacy's Board of Directors and is co-chair of the Tobacco Committee for the National Association of Attorneys General.

While youth smoking rates have dropped to their lowest levels in 22 years, the facts remain that nine percent of teens still smoke and nearly all lifetime smokers have their first cigarette by age 18.

"I am proud to work with Attorney General Zoeller and our partners as we commit to raise the first generation of tobacco-free teens," Madigan said. "We have fought to restrict the tobacco industry from marketing their deadly products to youth and invest in prevention and cessation programs. We will continue to fight for the same restrictions on e-cigarettes to end youth smoking in the United States."

Legacy's **truth** campaign launched a new movement called "Finish It" this month to empower the nation's youth to become the first tobacco-free generation. David Dobbins, chief operating officer of Legacy, reinforced the importance of this national youth movement at today's event.

"Tobacco is the number one cause of preventable death in this country – one in three youth smokers will eventually die from tobacco-related diseases. Legacy is committed to building on its success in driving down teen smoking rates, which have been on the decline since we launched the campaign in 2000. As we've done in the past with **truth**, we seek to empower today's young people with information and let them make informed choices about tobacco use. With this campaign, we are taking that notion a step

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further by asking them to join up and lead a movement to make their generation the generation that ends smoking once and for all,” Dobbins said.

Legacy was created as a result of the November 1998 Master Settlement Agreement (MSA) reached between attorneys general from 46 states, five U.S. territories and the tobacco industry. Legacy’s proven-effective and nationally recognized public education programs like **truth**® have been cited as contributing to significant declines in youth smoking.

Dr. Michael Wahl, the Illinois Poison Center Medical Director, and Dr. Lauren Camarda, attending physician in the Pediatric Pulmonary division at Ann and Robert H. Lurie Children’s Hospital of Chicago, also voiced their support at today’s event.

Efforts to curb youth smoking are making a difference in the Midwest. The Indiana Tobacco Prevention Cessation Commission (ITPC) reports that 13.7 percent of high school youth in Indiana were current smokers, a decline of 57 percent since 2000. Furthermore, 3.7 percent of middle school youth were current smokers, a decline of 62 percent since 2000 (*source: 2012 Indiana Youth Tobacco Survey*). In the Chicago metropolitan area, teen smoking rates have dropped 20 percent just since 2011.

Visit www.thetruth.com to join the movement.

ABOUT truth

truth® is the largest national youth smoking prevention campaign. The campaign exposes the tactics of the tobacco industry, the truth about addiction, and the health effects and social consequences of smoking. **truth** gives teens facts and information about the tobacco industry and its products, allowing them to make their own informed choices about tobacco use. Research-proven as an effective public health intervention, the campaign is credited with keeping hundreds of thousands of teens from starting to smoke. To learn more, visit www.thetruth.com. **truth** is directed and funded by Legacy, a national public health foundation located in Washington, D.C. Legacy was created as a result of the November 1998 Master Settlement Agreement (MSA) reached between attorneys general from 46 states, five U.S. territories and the tobacco industry. To learn more about Legacy’s life-saving programs, visit www.LegacyForHealth.org.

ABOUT LEGACY

Legacy envisions an America where tobacco is a thing of the past, where all youth and young adults reject tobacco use. Legacy’s proven-effective and nationally recognized public education programs include **truth**®, the national youth smoking prevention campaign that has been cited as contributing to significant declines in youth smoking; EX®, an innovative public health program designed to speak to smokers in their own language and change the way they approach quitting; and research initiatives exploring the causes, consequences and approaches to reducing tobacco use. Legacy also develops programs to address the health effects of tobacco use – with a focus on priority populations disproportionately affected by the toll of tobacco – through alliances, youth activism, training and technical assistance. Located in Washington, D.C., the foundation was created as a result of the November 1998 Master Settlement Agreement (MSA) reached between attorneys general from 46 states, five U.S. territories and the tobacco industry. To learn more about Legacy’s life-saving programs, visit www.LegacyForHealth.org.

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