



# BERRIEN COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

better health. stronger communities.

**For Immediate Release**

## **Berrien County Health Department Recognizes Lung Cancer Awareness Month and National Smoking Cessation Month, Highlights Services**

**Benton Harbor, Michigan, Nov. 14, 2023** – In honor of November as Lung Cancer Awareness Month and National Smoking Cessation Month, the Berrien County Health Department is reminding community members about the risk factors of the disease and highlighting services to help individuals quit smoking.

Lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer death in the U.S., accounting for about 1 in 5 of all cancer deaths. Smoking is the leading risk factor for lung cancer, accounting for about 80% of lung cancer deaths, according to the American Cancer Society. Radon exposure is the second-leading cause of lung cancer, followed by secondhand smoke.

Lung Cancer Awareness Month and National Smoking Cessation Month are annual observances that raise awareness about the dangers of lung cancer and smoking and the deadly toll they have in the U.S. Along with the Great American Smokeout on Nov. 16, National Smoking Cessation Month empowers individuals who want to quit smoking to start their journey toward a smoke-free life.

“These observances are important in our efforts to continue educating our community about the risk factors of lung cancer and the services and resources we offer to help them live a smoke-free life,” Health Officer Guy Miller said.

“Tobacco use is the leading preventable cause of death and disease in Michigan, which is why we place a high priority on education and prevention. From disease education to [smoking cessation classes](#) to our ‘Escape the Vape’ campaign, we are committed to empowering and supporting community members in achieving optimal health.”

BCHD offers American Lung Association Freedom From Smoking® cessation classes, which cost \$35 per person and can be scheduled by contacting BCHD’s Public Health

Promotion and Prevention at 269.927.5622. These sessions will again be offered in January.

The BCHD substance use disorder prevention team's "[Escape the Vape](#)" campaign seeks to educate community members younger than 21 about the negative effects of vaping and tobacco use and to discourage them from using tobacco products.

Lung cancer screening is recommended for adults ages 50 to 80, individuals who have a history of smoking 20 packs or more of cigarettes a year and anyone who currently smokes or has quit smoking within the past 15 years. These individuals are encouraged to talk with their health care provider about getting screened.

The Environmental Protection Agency estimates radon is responsible for about 20,000 lung cancer deaths in the country each year. There are no short-term side effects or a distinctive color, smell or taste to alert individuals of elevated radon levels in their home. Testing is the only way to determine if radon levels are at an actionable level.

Residents are encouraged to test their home for radon every two to five years. For more information on radon testing and resources, visit [Michigan.gov/Radon](#).

For more information about lung cancer, visit the MDHHS [website](#). For additional smoking cessation resources, visit [berriencounty.org/783/Quit-Smoking](#).

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