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Contact: Audrey Eisenberg
Desk: (312) 628-0214 / Cell: (630) 207-6337

FDA to present tobacco training for retailers Chicago

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is hosting a training session on tobacco retailer compliance at the Chicago Downtown Renaissance today from 1 – 5 p.m. In June, new FDA regulations took effect, limiting the promotion and sale of cigarettes and smokeless tobacco products. The Chicago retailer training will educate local retail owners, managers and staff on updated requirements to ensure tobacco control compliance at local storefronts.

In particular, the new regulations provide tough restrictions aimed at reducing youth access to tobacco products and exposure to tobacco marketing. “Compliance with the new regulations will support local efforts to curb youth and adult smoking rates and decrease exposure to secondhand smoke,” said Joel Africk, president and CEO of Respiratory Health Association of Metropolitan Chicago (RHAMC).

Dr. Bechara Choucair, Chicago’s commissioner of public health, added: “Outreach to local retailers is an important strategy for raising awareness and building allies for public health in our efforts to reduce tobacco use among Chicagoans.” He continued, “We know the fight against tobacco is a winnable battle, and that by deploying a combination of policy, social support and media strategies we can significantly reduce tobacco-related deaths in our communities.”

The training will include a presentation and discussion period around the following topics: who is subject to the regulation, what tobacco products are regulated, prohibition of sale and distribution of cigarettes and smokeless tobacco to persons younger than 18, self-service displays and vending machines, minimum cigarette and smokeless tobacco package sizes, prohibition of free samples of cigarettes and more.

Similar training sessions have been hosted in Boston and Atlanta, and more are planned for Dallas and Los Angeles in late September. Retailers are encouraged to attend the live training or download educational materials from www.fda.gov.

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Respiratory Health Association of Metropolitan Chicago (RHAMC) was a leader in securing Smoke-Free Chicago and Smoke-Free Illinois legislation. RHAMC has partnered with the City of Chicago to lead the Chicago Tobacco Prevention Project through March, 2012. Funded by a grant from the Centers for Disease Control, the comprehensive program seeks to decrease smoking rates among youth and adults, reduce exposure to secondhand smoke and reduce tobacco-related deaths. To learn more visit www.lungchicago.org/ctpp.