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**LOCAL TOBACCO CONTROL OFFICIALS SEE OPPORTUNITY TO LOWER
SMOKING RATE, IMPROVE HEALTH OF THE COMMUNITY**

***National Health Survey Viewed as Key to Better
Quality of Life in Marion County***

Indianapolis, Ind. – Following the recent release of a nationwide report ranking the overall health of every county in every state, including Indiana, the Indiana Latino Institute, Inc. today said the report provides “...a great opportunity for us to closely examine the role that smoking plays in the health of our community. We need to take more concrete steps to implement stronger smoking policies that will lower the county’s smoking rate in our cities and towns.”

The study -- conducted by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute – revealed in stark terms the progress that is needed with important issues, such as lowering the number of smokers.

Marion County received an overall ranking of 80 in Health Outcomes. Tobacco use was one of the factors used in determining the health rankings. In our county, 26 % of adults who smoke and that translates to about 166,063.

“The good news is that in Indiana and here in our community, we already have in place a wealth of resources to drive down smoking rates,” said Aida McCammon, President/CEO, Indiana Latino Institute, Inc.

Locally, the Indiana Latino Institute, Inc. is working with people in the community including institutions, such as schools, to help adults quit smoking and for youth not to start.

“The Indiana Latino Institute, Inc. is educating bar owners in Indianapolis about the benefits of Going Smoke Free! We will continue working until Indianapolis passes a comprehensive smoke free law that covers all workplaces, including bars, nightclubs and bowling alleys,” said, Aida McCammon, President/CEO, Indiana Latino Institute, Inc.

Statewide, people who are ready to quit are encouraged to call the free Indiana Tobacco Quitline at 1-800-QUIT-NOW. Trained quit coaches are available from 7 a.m until 3 a.m., 365 days a year, to provide tips and advice on quitting. Once registered, people who call are eligible to receive a free, two-week supply of nicotine gum or patches.

“During the last two years it was very difficult for Latino smokers to find time for cessation classes. Now, with the Indiana Tobacco Quitline, Latino smokers are able to call anytime, 7 days a week, from 7am to 3am and speak to a professional who speaks their language. More Latinos are taking advantage of this free cessation services,” said Maria Luisa Tishner, Program Director, Indiana Latino Institute, Inc.

For more information on the study and to see how your county ranked, visit www.countyhealthrankings.org. To receive additional information on quitting smoking in Marion County, visit the site ww.indianalatinoinstitute.com

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