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**New Surgeon General's Report Shows Immediate
Need for Strong Tobacco Control Programs**

Indianapolis, IN. (December 13, 2010) – Local health advocates said a new U.S. Surgeon General's Report was released today that provides a stark reminder of how lethal and addictive smoking is for everyone. This report underscores the importance of actions to prevent kids from starting to smoke, help smokers quit and protect everyone's right to breathe clean air-free.

“Exposure to tobacco smoke causes immediate damage to your body. The next cigarette you smoke can be the cigarette that is the trigger for a deadly heart or asthma attack, or damage your DNA which can lead to cancer,” says Aida McCammon, President/CEO, Indiana Latino Institute, Inc., and Maria Luisa Tishner, Program Director, ILI, was impressed with the U.S. Surgeon General's announcement, that due to comprehensive tobacco control efforts, California is on its way of became the first state where lung cancer is not among the leading causes of death.

In the new report there is biological evidence that suggests each cigarette is doing immediate damage and the sooner the smoker quits, the better. The message is clear, it is important to act now to reduce adult smoking in Indiana.

The report also finds that today's cigarettes are designed to deliver nicotine more efficiently to the brain, addicting kids more quickly and making it harder for smokers to quit. Today's tobacco products are designed for addiction.

“This report stresses the need for a strong tobacco prevention and cessation program like we have had for the last 10 years in Indiana. Reducing tobacco use is one of the most effective ways to protect our state's health and prevent deadly and costly diseases such as cancer and heart attacks by preventing kids from starting and helping adults quit,” added, Aida McCammon.

The Surgeon General's report details the serious health effects of even brief exposure to tobacco smoke. It concludes that:

- Tobacco smoke contains more than 7,000 chemicals, including hundreds that are toxic and at least 70 that cause cancer.
- Every exposure to the cancer-causing chemicals in tobacco smoke can damage DNA in a way that leads to cancer.
- Exposure to secondhand smoke has an immediate adverse impact on the cardiovascular system, damaging blood vessels, making blood more likely to clot and increasing risks for heart attack and stroke.
- Smoking makes it harder for women to get pregnant and can cause miscarriage, premature birth and low birth weight. It also harms male fertility.

According to Surgeon General Regina Benjamin, “There is no safe level of exposure to tobacco smoke. Every inhalation of tobacco smoke exposes our children, our families, and our loved ones to dangerous chemicals that can damage their bodies and result in life-threatening diseases such as cancer and heart disease.”

It is imperative for Indiana to continue its progress; in 2009, smoking rates declined to an historic low rate of 23.1 percent representing a highly significant downward trend in adult smoking between 2001-2009 (down from 27.4% in 2001 to 23.1% in 2009). Indiana now has 208,000 fewer smokers than just 10 years ago, but nevertheless Indiana still ranks below nearly every other state in the country (Indiana ranks 45 in smoking rate). There are still more than one million smokers in Indiana and the costs continue to mount up.

- Each year there are 9,700 deaths in Indiana due to tobacco use.
- There are over 194,000 Hoosiers living with serious tobacco-related illness.
- The tobacco use burden to the Indiana economy is \$7.7 billion in annual costs.
- Indiana spends a total of \$487 million each year on Medicaid payments caused by tobacco use.

The report and related materials can be found at www.surgeongeneral.gov.

For more information on how to quit smoking, please contact Indiana Latino Institute, Inc. at 317-472-1055.

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