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Contact: Julia Cartwright, 202-454-5596
jcartwright@americanlegacy.org

**CURRENT ECONOMIC SITUATION PROMPTS INCREASED SMOKING,
DELAY IN QUIT ATTEMPTS
MIDDLE AND LOW-INCOME AMERICANS HIT HARDEST
*One in Four Smokers Stressed About State of Economy
Smoking More on Daily Basis***

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today the American Legacy Foundation[®] – the nation’s largest public health foundation dedicated to reducing tobacco use in the U.S. – announced the results of a new survey conducted on their behalf by Harris Interactive which found that stress about the ongoing financial downturn is having a clear and immediate effect on smokers.

Seventy-seven percent of current smokers report increased stress levels due to the current state of the economy and two-thirds of those smokers say this stress has had an effect on their smoking.

November marks **Lung Cancer Awareness Month**, a time when smokers might reflect on the life threatening nature of their addiction, yet this new data indicates smokers are suffering more than ever as stress is causing smokers to delay a quit attempt, increase the number of cigarettes they are smoking, or switch to a cheaper brand instead of quitting. Moreover, some former smokers report they are starting to smoke again because of the stress over the financial situation.

Among the survey findings:

- One in four smokers stressed about the economy say this stress has caused them to smoke more cigarettes per day, higher among women (31%) than men (17%).
- Those smokers with lower household incomes are especially affected by the financial crisis. A greater percentage of stressed smokers with a household income of less than \$35k reported smoking more cigarettes per day (38%) due to the current state of the economy, compared to those with household incomes of \$35-74k (24%) and those with incomes of more than \$75k (13%).
- In addition, a greater percentage of middle-income (\$35-74.9k) stressed smokers have delayed their quit attempts because of stress over the economy (20%) than those with household incomes of under \$35k (14%) and to a greater extent more than those stressed higher-income (more than \$75k household income) smokers (6%).
- Unemployed smokers stressed about the economy reported smoking more cigarettes per day (29%) in greater numbers than full-time or self-employed stressed smokers (17%).

“We are especially concerned about how the economy is impacting those struggling to quit and stay quit,” said Cheryl G. Heaton, Dr. P.H., president and CEO of the American Legacy Foundation. The survey found that 7 percent of current smokers surveyed had started smoking again due to stress over the economic crisis, even though they had previously quit. Furthermore, 9 percent of stressed-out former smokers said the state of the economy had tempted them to start smoking again. Even more telling, 13 percent of stressed smokers say their stress about the economy has caused them to postpone their plans to quit.

“It is no secret that stress is a major factor in smoking habits,” Dr. Heaton added. “The turbulent global stock markets have caused virtually every American a certain level of stress. Those who also struggle with an addiction to tobacco products are at an increased disadvantage as they contemplate quitting, or feel the urge to smoke more cigarettes. Quitting smoking under normal circumstances is one of the most difficult things you can do. Smokers need to create a comprehensive quit plan, use the right medications

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or nicotine replacement products to help them with their quit attempt, and get social support from family, friends and colleagues. It's challenging to make a comprehensive attempt to quit when issues like job security, uncertainty about the future, and the worries of your family and friends keep you from having all the resources you need to tackle this very difficult addiction."

2,375 U.S. Adults aged 18+, of whom 1,347 had ever smoked participated in the survey.

The survey also found economic stress is causing smokers to re-evaluate their buying habits when it comes to tobacco products:

- One-fifth of smokers stressed about the state of the economy have switched to a cheaper brand to save money.
- More stressed smokers with household incomes of less than \$35k (28%) reported brand-switching compared to those with household incomes of more than \$50k (12%). One quarter of those with incomes of \$35-\$49k reported switching brands to save money.

November is Lung Cancer Awareness Month and November 20 marks the Great American Smoke Out—both serve as important reminders about the ongoing issue of tobacco addiction in our country, and the 45 million Americans who smoke, many of whom desperately want to quit. Each year, approximately 70 percent of smokers say they want to quit, but only about five percent are successful long-term.

Now more than ever, smokers need reliable and relatable information about quitting.

Earlier this year, Legacy and a coalition of public health groups launched **EX**[®], a quit smoking program that encourages smokers to "re-learn life without cigarettes." The campaign aims to educate smokers about the daily triggers that make them want to smoke, and preps them how to overcome triggers with practice and preparation.

Financial stress is a prime smoking trigger and smokers can learn valuable tools to help them prepare for a quit attempt by visiting www.BecomeAnEX.org. The Web site features action-oriented tools and information to help smokers prepare for quitting by developing a personalized plan, as well offering a virtual community, where smokers can reach out to others for support and to share stories about their quit attempts.

It is a widely held belief among the public health community that setting a quit date and planning your quit attempt around that date is an important step in the quit process. With the American Cancer Society's Great American Smoke Out slated for November 20 this year, smokers have an ideal date to choose as their quit date, alongside millions of other smokers, both to add years to their lives and dollars back to their wallets.

November is also a powerful month to quit as it marks Lung Cancer Awareness Month. Lung cancer is the nation's number-one cancer killer. Despite this fact, there is no test or exam that's sure to catch the disease at its earliest stage. That's why prevention – quitting smoking or never starting – remains so important to reducing lung cancer.

About 85 percent of people diagnosed with lung cancer are current or former smokers. Lung cancer sufferers also suffer from an unfair social stigma – the perception that they had the power to avoid a lung cancer diagnosis if only they had been able to quit. For more information about lung cancer, please visit www.americanlegacy.org/codeblue.

*The American Legacy Foundation[®] is dedicated to building a world where young people reject tobacco and anyone can quit. Located in Washington, D.C., the foundation develops programs that address the health effects of tobacco use, especially among vulnerable populations disproportionately affected by the toll of tobacco, through grants, technical assistance and training, partnerships, youth activism, and counter-marketing and grassroots marketing campaigns. The Foundation's programs include **truth**[®], a 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; research initiatives exploring the causes, consequences and approaches to reducing tobacco use; and a nationally-renowned program of outreach to priority populations. The American Legacy 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. Visit <http://www.americanlegacy.org>.

The American Legacy Foundation® is equipped with a VideoLink ReadyCam™ television studio system, providing you with faster, easier access to the nation's leading tobacco prevention and cessation experts. From this in-house broadcast studio, Legacy can offer immediate access to its experts to comment on breaking news, new research publications, or any news related to youth smoking prevention, adult quit smoking programs, or any issue related to smoking. The studio is connected directly to the Vyvx fiber network and is always available for live or pre-taped interviews. To arrange an interview, please contact Julia Cartwright at 202-454-5596.

Methodology

This survey was conducted online within the United States by Harris Interactive via its QuickQuerySM online omnibus service on behalf of The American Legacy Foundation between October 28th and 30th, 2008 among 2,375 U.S. adults aged 18 years and older, of whom 1,347 have ever smoked. Results were weighted as needed for region, age within gender, education, household income and race/ethnicity. Propensity score weighting was also used to adjust for respondents' propensity to be online. No estimates of theoretical sampling error can be calculated; a full methodology is available.

About Harris Interactive

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