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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Voorhees

November 16, 2009

MOMS: JOIN THE GREAT AMERICAN SMOKEOUT Mom's Quit Connection Helps Parents Quit Smoking for their Kids

PENNSAUKEN, NJ—Quit smoking for a day and you might find the strength to make it stick—that's the message of the Great American Smokeout. With free, long-term help from **Mom's Quit Connection**, South Jersey parents have a better chance to increase their odds of remaining smoke-free.

Mom's Quit Connection (MQC) is a free smoking cessation service provided by the non-profit Southern New Jersey Perinatal Cooperative. The goal of MQC is to help pregnant women, mothers, families, and caregivers of young children to stop or greatly reduce their tobacco use for the health and safety of their children.

During the 34th annual **Great American Smokeout** on **Thursday, November 19, 2009**, MQC will be helping families use their 24-hour quit momentum to stop smoking permanently.

"The Great American Smokeout inspires a lot of smokers to take that initial step towards quitting," says MQC Program Coordinator Cathy Butler. "MQC offers the long-term support that can give moms a greater chance of staying quit."

"Best of all," says Butler, "Mom's Quit Connection is free."

(cont'd)

Mom’s Quit Connection offers personalized quit plans and long-term support for pregnant women and mothers who smoke. Since the program is funded by the Comprehensive Tobacco Control Program of New Jersey—which oversees the state Quitline, QuitNet, and New Jersey Quit Centers—MQC also provides referrals for anyone in the family who wants to stop smoking. This level of coordination ensures that parents who want to stop smoking with MQC enjoy a continuity of care from among all state resources.

Reaching pregnant smokers is a top priority for New Jersey. Smoking can cause birth defects and low birth weight, both of which can increase health complications throughout a child’s life. As important as it is to stop smoking during pregnancy, it is just as important to make sure parents bring their babies home to a smoke-free household, says Butler.

“Secondhand smoke is quite harmful to babies,” says Butler. “It can affect the development of their lungs and can cause asthma and allergies.”

Whatever the reasons a smoker chooses to quit, the benefits of being smoke-free are immediate. They range from extra money in the pocket to improved health, greater energy, and improved senses of taste and smell. Most important, however, is the understanding that living smoke-free means that parents are making a healthier choice that affects their children’s health as well.

“The Great American Smokeout is a wonderful reminder that every day we get another chance to turn things around,” says Butler. “Whether it’s confronting an addictive behavior or making a healthier choice for our kids, the door is always open for change.

“MQC is here to help,” she says.

Contact Mom’s Quit Connection at 1-888-545-5191 (toll-free) or mqc@snjpc.org. For more information about the program, visit www.snjpc.org.

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Mom’s Quit Connection is a program of the Southern New Jersey Perinatal Cooperative (SNJPC). It is funded by the NJ Department of Health and Senior Services and the Comprehensive Tobacco Control Program.

SNJPC is the state-licensed, non-profit, maternal-child health consortium serving the seven southernmost counties of New Jersey. Its programs and services are dedicated to improving health outcomes for mothers and babies in South Jersey.

For more information about the Cooperative or its services, call 856-665-6000 or visit snjpc.org.