



**NEWS**

**Date: February 22, 2008**  
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## **GLADES GENERAL HOSPITAL LAUNCHES NEW QUIT SMOKING PROGRAM**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Belle Glade, FL, February 22, 2008 – February is American Heart Month. According to the American Heart Association, cigarette smoking is a major cause of coronary heart disease, which leads to heart attacks. As the most important preventable cause of premature death in the United States, Glades General Hospital (GGH) is helping the community to quit smoking and quit chew/spit tobacco with the launch of a new program free to all residents.

The “Quit Smoking Now” program kicked off in early February. Classes meet every Thursday evening from 5:30pm-6:30pm in the GGH human resources training conference room. Each session lasts 6 weeks. Participants receive a book the first day with tips and tools to identify why they smoke in the first place. The class reviews the week's goals and the past week's progress. Students discuss where they may need support and identify ways to meet their goals. The program also incorporates the Florida Department of Health Quit Line which offers one on one counseling through their Quit-for-Life Line. In addition, participants may qualify for nicotine replacement therapy at no cost depending on a medical intake and income assessment. The toll free number for the Quit Line is 1-877-822-6669. The class is taught by Erin Etheridge, a Glades General Hospital nurse and the Employee Health Coordinator who has a background in education. According to Ms. Etheridge, “The program has the potential to make a momentous impact on our community as smoking related diseases flood our health care system and disable our citizens. A smoke-free community will live longer, healthier, and more productive lives.”

GGH has recognized the need for a stop smoking program in the region. "We understand the healthcare challenges our community faces and we have developed educational programs that help people change habits and behaviors to live healthier lives," said David Zechman, Glades General Hospital CEO. "In our new hospital, we'll be able to reach more people and make an even greater impact with significantly more space for education programs." Plans for the new \$73 million regional hospital under construction in the Glades include classroom and conference facilities to increase prevention and wellness education offerings in the region. The Health Care District of Palm Beach County has committed \$50 million toward building the facility, which will replace Glades General Hospital. Glades Healthcare Foundation ([www.gladeshealthcare.org](http://www.gladeshealthcare.org)) is leading the fund raising campaign to complete the project.

The GGH "Quit Smoking Now" program is sponsored by Everglades Area Health Education Centers (EAHEC), an agency who has a mission to enhance access to quality health care, particularly primary and preventive care, by improving the supply and distribution of health care professionals through community/academic educational partnerships. The next GGH "Quit Smoking Now" session begins March 13, 2008. Registrations are now being accepted. To register, call Erin Ethridge at 561- 996-6571 ext 507. For more information about "Quit Smoking Now", Florida Quit-For-Life Line and other tobacco education programs please contact Marilyn Leeds, Director of Tobacco Education and Cessation Services for Everglades AHEC at 561-640-3620.

#### About Glades General Hospital:

*Glades General Hospital, Palm Beach County's only public hospital, is a JCAHO accredited 73- bed acute care facility located in the heart of a large agricultural belt on the southern shores of Lake Okeechobee. Operated by the Health Care District of Palm Beach County, GGH is one of the largest employers in the Glades with just over 300 employees. The Health Care District is currently constructing a \$73 million new regional hospital and medical campus that will open in 2010. Glades Healthcare Foundation is leading the fundraising campaign for this technologically-advanced facility that will feature all-private patient rooms. The new 70-bed hospital hopes to attract physicians and patients from all over Palm Beach County with services including: a Trauma Hawk air landing pad; a 24-hour physician staffed emergency room; obstetrics with advanced diagnostic testing; general surgery; social services; radiology and nuclear medicine.*