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PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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“No Butts About It” at UMass Amherst

AMHERST, Mass. – Cigarette butts are everywhere ... little leftovers from someone’s smoke break, dropped and forgotten on walkways, in front of buildings and in the grass. But soon there’ll be a lot fewer of them on the UMass Amherst campus.

Sunday, Nov. 2 marks the third annual “No Butts About It Day,” when members of the campus community will don gloves, grab trash bags and go hunting for improperly discarded butts. The event, organized by the Student Health Advisory Board (SHAB) at University Health Services, runs from noon – 3 p.m.

Collected butts will be brought to stations at the Berkshire, Franklin and Worcester Dining Commons; they’ll become part of a display planned in conjunction with the American Cancer Society’s Great American Smokeout on November 20. Last year, 11 ½ pounds of butts were collected in a two-hour span.

SHAB raises awareness of health issues and provides input into the health center’s programs and services. The No Butts About It project was selected because of cigarettes’ impact on both health and the environment and developed with support from the American Cancer Society’s Colleges Against Cancer program.

Consider these facts from the City of Berkeley Tobacco Control Program:

- Cigarette butts take an average of 25 years to decompose.
- Cigarette butts are washed from city streets into rivers, lakes and oceans through storm drains. Seabirds, animals and fish eat them by mistake and die because they can’t digest the filters.
- On average, a tree is cut down for every 300 cigarettes – about a two-week supply for a pack-a-day smoker.
- The tobacco industry burns as much as one acre of forest for every acre of tobacco cured, using 12% of all the timber felled in the world.

Volunteers are needed to pick up butts and staff collection sites; contact Tom Schiff, tschiff@uhs.umass.edu; 577-5133.

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INTERVIEW OPPORTUNITIES:

- Tom Schiff, Ed.D., Student Health Advisory Board coordinator, UHS
- Volunteer participants

PHOTO OPPORTUNITIES:

Volunteer collectors will be available for photos on Nov. 2; contact UHS to make arrangements.