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Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**CONTACT: Tara Biesecker, PIO****PHONE: (208) 799-3100****DATE: January 14, 2012****HEADLINE: Timberline 7th & 8th Graders Participate in T.A.T.U.**

WEIPPE, IDAHO - The 7th and 8th graders at Timberline Schools participated in the Teens Against Tobacco Use (TATU) program, facilitated by Public Health – Idaho North Central District (PH-INCD). The students were trained as TATU teen teachers during Mrs. Linda Turrill's PE class. They developed fun, creative, interactive anti-tobacco presentations for the 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th grade students at Timberline. The presentations were held on December 12.

The presentations focused on such topics as the dangers of secondhand smoke exposure, the costs of tobacco, ways to say no, the health effects, the dangers of smokeless tobacco, and more. The program uses a peer-teaching model that empowers teens and educates younger kids about the hazards of tobacco.

"The average age Idaho youth first try cigarettes is 12. For smokeless tobacco it's age 10. It's so important that we start talking to kids about the dangers of tobacco as soon as possible," reports Heidi Henson, Health Education Specialist for PH-INCD. "Tobacco companies target youth to replace the 400,000 Americans killed by their products each year. If these students prevent at least one of their peers from using tobacco, the program has been successful."

The TATU program also encourages the students to share tobacco cessation resources with their friends and family members who may use tobacco. Idaho residents can get a month's supply of nicotine patches, gum or lozenges by calling 1-800-QUIT-NOW. Public Health also provides free classes throughout the region to help people quit using tobacco. Free New Year's Quit Kits are also available from Public Health.

TATU is offered free to schools and community groups. To schedule a TATU teen training, request a TATU presentation for your school or group, or to find out more about the cessation resources, contact Heidi Henson at 208-799-0368 or visit www.idahopublichealth.com.