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Vietnamese community leads the way in tackling tobacco

Smokers in south western Sydney's Vietnamese community are being supported to quit this World No Tobacco Day, thanks to the District's new project *Bỏ Thuốc Sống Khỏe – Quit & Fit*.

The project raises awareness of the health risks of tobacco through education sessions and healthy lifestyle programs that focus on stress management, well-being, healthy eating and the importance of physical activity.

South Western Sydney Local Health District Health Promotion Service Director Mandy Williams said the project aims to help increase attempts to quit and reduce smoking-related harm in the Vietnamese-speaking community living in the Fairfield Local Government Area.

"Community members were encouraged to have their say during the project's development, which helped us understand their concerns around tobacco and the best ways to address the problem," Ms Williams said.

"*Quit & Fit* encourages Vietnamese speakers who smoke or are at risk of smoking to see their GP or pharmacist for assistance. People who seek support during the quitting process are far more likely to be successful," she said.

The latest report by the Cancer Institute NSW showed that the Vietnamese community had one of the highest rates of smoking when compared with other cultural and linguistically diverse communities. The report also found the proportion of Vietnamese men who smoked (32%) was double that of the overall NSW rate (11.3%).

"This project is funded by the Cancer Institute NSW through a \$150,000 Cancer Screening and Prevention Grant, which we are extremely grateful for," Ms Williams said.

South Western Sydney Primary Health Network (PHN) CEO Rene Pennock said the program offers a range of practical steps and real solutions.

"The Quit & Fit project is a fantastic initiative and we are proud to have the opportunity to support the Local Health District in continuing to deliver effective health solutions in south western Sydney's Vietnamese community," Mr Pennock said.

For more information about the project or to sign up for an education session/healthy lifestyle program call Sheree Whittaker 02 8738 5900.