



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Sierra Lopez

Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce

FOR MORE INFORMATION – (860) 347-6924 or sierra@middlesexchamber.com

Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce to host a Free Vaping Workshop after Member Breakfast Meeting at the Sheraton Hartford South Hotel on March 16, 2020

(Middletown, CT.) Chairman, Don DeVivo of the Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce announced that a free vaping workshop titled, “*The Vaping Epidemic, The Truth and Consequences*” will be offered after the Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce’s Member Breakfast Meeting featuring UConn Head Women’s Basketball Coach Geno Auriemma.

The vaping workshop, presented by the City of Middletown, the Middlesex County Substance Abuse Action Council (MCSAAC), and the Chamber, will be held at the Sheraton Hartford South Hotel, 100 Capital Blvd, Rocky Hill, CT 06067, and will take place from 9:15 a.m. until 11:00 a.m.

Barbara Walsh from the State Department of Public Health will open the presentation by providing general information on the effects of vaping. Dr. Michael Kalinowski from Durham Middlefield Local Wellness Coalition will then speak on the negative health effects of vaping in the work place. Erica Skoutas from Hartford HealthCare Rushford Center will present vaping devices and other paraphernalia. Her presentation will increase the awareness of what e-cigarette and vaping devices look like, and potential ways to hide this addiction. Erica will also share smoking cessation resources that are available for those looking to quit.

Chamber President Larry McHugh noted, “We look forward to welcoming our panel of experts to our vaping workshop titled, “*The Vaping Epidemic, The Truth and Consequences.*” On behalf of the chamber, I want to thank Kevin Elak from the City of Middletown Health Department for providing us with support for this event. The Chamber plans on having two more vaping workshops in the upper and lower valley.”

About Barbara Walsh- Barbara is the Program Manager for the Connecticut Tobacco Control Program funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, working to reduce tobacco use in Connecticut residents to improve health. Their program promotes tobacco-free lifestyles that includes both helping current tobacco users to quit and preventing people from starting to use tobacco, especially through policy and system changes.

About Dr. Michael Kalinowski- Dr. Michael Kalinowski is a Family Physician and Project Director with the Durham Middlefield Local Wellness Coalition. He has a professional focus and passion for disease prevention through community education and lifestyle medicine

approaches. He has a personal commitment to the prevention of smoking and vaping, having lost multiple family members to lung cancer.

About Erica Skoutas- Erica Skoutas is a Prevention Professional at Rushford Center, a nationally certified Mental Health First Aid Instructor and Chair of the Middletown Substance Abuse Prevention Council (MSAPC). Her primary focus is on reducing and preventing substance use and its related problems among youth. Erica is the advisor to middle school and high school youth peer leadership groups and she works with youth leaders throughout the community to increase the awareness of risks associated with youth substance use and promote mental wellness.

About the Chamber- The Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce is a dynamic business organization with over 2,175 members that employ over 50,000 people. Our chamber represents businesses of all sizes and industry sectors, from Fortune 500 companies to micro businesses, and we are committed to promoting a positive business climate in Middlesex County. Monthly Member Breakfast Meetings feature keynote speakers from a number of different professional fields including the business community, national politics, sports, and entertainment. In addition to high profile speakers, Chamber Member Breakfast Meetings provide outstanding networking opportunities and attract between 300 and 600 Chamber members each month.

###