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M. Rony François, M.D., M.S.P.H., Ph.D.
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PINELLAS COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact:

Jeannine Mallory, Public Information Director
PINELLAS COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT
727-824-6908 (for media use only)

SWAT Takes Its Message to the Beach

Students Working Against Tobacco (SWAT) will hold its annual SWAT Sandblast **Saturday, March 25 at Treasure Island Beach, 11260 Gulf Blvd.**

SWAT is the youth-led organization that teaches other youth about the manipulation and marketing efforts of the tobacco industry. Developers of the original **truth** marketing campaign, the group has a proven track record. According to the 2004 Florida Youth Tobacco Survey, middle school smoking rates have declined 57% and high school rates have declined 37% since 1998.

“The tobacco industry hasn’t stopped lying and deceiving people, so we can’t stop exposing the truth,” said Alison Griner, Chair of Pinellas County’s SWAT. “Without the money, we’ve had to focus on more grassroots approach.

The SWAT Sandblast is one of the ways SWAT gets its message out to teens. While participants enjoy volleyball, tug-of-war and other games, the leaders of SWAT expose them to tobacco facts and industry quotes. Free gear with the anti-Big Tobacco message is also given away—much in the same manner tobacco companies give free things to market their products.

Registration for teams and individuals begins at 9:45 a.m., with events starting at 10:45 a.m. The event is free to youth in middle school and high school, and is co-sponsored by the City of St. Petersburg’s TASC0 group and Steps to a HealthierFlorida-Pinellas County. For more information, call 727-824-6947.

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The mission of the Pinellas County Health Department is to promote, protect and improve the health and safety of residents and visitors through public and private community efforts.
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