



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **COPD Awareness Night at the Everblades**

**MIAMI, FL (November 20, 2009)**— The Florida COPD Coalition and the Southwest Florida COPD Advocate Team are teaming up with the COPD Foundation to host a COPD Awareness Night with the Everblades on November 20 to educate and inform the public about COPD.

“It’s a community event with 6,000 people attending the hockey game, and we’ll be there to provide information for awareness of COPD and smoking cessation information,” Bob Sobkowiak, an RRT, certified asthma educator and volunteer with the Southwest Florida COPD Advocate team, says. “We’ll also be providing spirometry measurements to identify if (people) have an obstructive lung problem, and if they have a problem to direct them to their physician.”

Sobkowiak says the hockey game is the perfect opportunity to interface with the public and spread community awareness about COPD.

“It’s a good gathering for people to become aware of information they didn’t already know,” he says of the event that coincides with World COPD week and the Great American Smokeout.

“Tying into awareness and education, we’re trying to introduce people into understanding (COPD) and to change the stigma of COPD in our community,” Sobkowiak says. “People understand it as more like asthma, but we want it to be well understood in a more positive way.”

Sobkowiak also says that they will be disseminating information on risk factors to help educate people on Alpha-1 Antitrypsin Deficiency and other factors, as well as smoking.

“We’re very excited about this event. It’s our first opportunity at this type of event and we’re looking at future ones,” he says.

COPD Awareness Night at the Everblades will be from 6:30 p.m. to 10 p.m., with most of the awareness sharing and testing before the game (which begins at 7:30 p.m.) and during intermission.

### **The Southwest Florida COPD Advocate Team**

The SW FL COPD Advocate Team is a community of volunteers composed of COPD patients, caregivers and healthcare professionals who work together to improve the quality of life for those living with COPD. The team is sponsored by the COPD Foundation in partnership with the American Lung Association of Florida and the Florida Society of Respiratory Care and other community partners including education, community service, faith-based and health care provider groups.

### **The Florida COPD Coalition**

The FL COPD Coalition includes members from government, academic institutions, and health and advocacy groups who are dedicated to combating the burden of COPD in the state of Florida. The FL COPD Coalition is developing a statewide plan for addressing COPD in Florida, including strategies for public and private outreach and awareness initiatives and partnerships.

### **About the COPD Foundation:**

The COPD Foundation is dedicated to developing and supporting programs which improve the quality of life through research, education, early diagnosis, and enhanced therapy for persons whose lives are impacted by Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD). The COPD Foundation has several programs dedicated to informing, empowering, educating, and engaging individuals affected by COPD, including both diagnosed and undiagnosed individuals, their families and friends, and their medical professionals. For more information, please visit: <http://www.copdfoundation.org>.

### **About COPD:**

Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) is the fourth leading cause of death in the U.S. and the only chronic disease growing in mortality. It affects approximately 24 million Americans but only 12 million are diagnosed. COPD includes chronic bronchitis, emphysema, and adult onset (refractory) asthma. Symptoms include breathlessness, wheezing, and chronic coughing. For more information about COPD, visit <http://www.copdfoundation.org> or call 1-866-316-COPD (2673).

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