

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**  
**Monday, November 14, 2011**

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For Wednesday, November 16, 2011

## **HHS Assistant Secretary Dr. Howard Koh and Public Health Leaders Talk Tobacco on November 16**

MANCHESTER, NH: Dr. Howard Koh, Assistant Secretary for Health of the United States Department of Health and Human Services will join the state health commissioners from Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont on November 16<sup>th</sup> to call on state and local leaders to strengthen policies to help tobacco users quit, particularly low-income smokers, military veterans, and other vulnerable populations. They will also discuss the problem of secondhand smoke exposure in multi-unit housing. While New England has been a leader in policies to prevent tobacco use, help smokers quit, and reduce exposure to secondhand smoke, tobacco use continues to be all too prevalent among particular populations, including low income adults (39.4% smoke), the uninsured (35.5% smoke) and military personnel (30.6%) – all dramatically higher than the national rate of 20.6% for adults. Annually, health care costs from tobacco amount to \$1.63 billion in Connecticut, \$602 million in Maine, \$3.54 billion in Massachusetts, \$564 million in New Hampshire, \$506 million in Rhode Island, and \$233 million in Vermont.

**WHO:** Dr. Howard Koh, Assistant Secretary for Health, United States Department of Health and Human Services  
State Health Commissioners from the six New England States

**WHAT:** Press Conference immediately prior to the *New England Tobacco Town Hall*

**WHEN:** Wednesday, November 16, 2011 at 11:30am

**WHERE:** Executive Court Banquet Facility  
1199 South Mammouth Road  
Manchester, NH

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