



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Oral Cancer Survivor to Speak to 1,150 Area Students *Feb. 12-18 is Through With Chew Week in Wisconsin and Across America*

Who: Gruen VonBehrens, a 28-year-old national speaker and former spit tobacco user, will discuss his experience with oral cancer and plastic surgery with 1,150 middle and high school students across the Fox Valley today, Feb. 17. VonBehrens endured 35 surgeries that removed his jaw and part of his tongue and disfigured his neck and face. He started using spit tobacco at age 13 and was diagnosed with cancer at age 17.

What: VonBehrens will encourage students to say “no” to spit tobacco use.

Why: Research shows spit tobacco use by young American males is increasing. And the 2005 Wisconsin Youth Risk Behavior Survey reveals that 14 percent of Wisconsin male students and two percent of female students in high school used chewing tobacco in the previous month. About 100,000 Wisconsin residents of all ages use spit tobacco products, according to the Centers for Disease Control. The use of smoking and chewing tobacco directly leads to approximately 440,000 deaths in the United States and 7,000 in Wisconsin each year – more than AIDS, murders, suicides, drugs, alcohol and motor-vehicle accidents combined. National Through With Chew Week is Feb. 12-18.

Where & When:

Friday, Feb. 17

- 10:15 a.m., **Waupaca Middle School Auditorium**, 1149 Shoemaker Rd., VonBehrens speaks to 400 7th and 8th grade students.
- 12:30 p.m., **Chilton High School Auditorium**, 530 West Main St., Chilton, VonBehrens speaks to 750 middle and high school students.
- VonBehrens interview availability* from 1:30 -1:45 p.m. **Chilton High School** or 3:00 p.m. at **Tundra Lodge**.

* Please call Roger Dier at (920) 360-1965 to set up interviews.

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