



November 28, 2011

Stanton A. Glantz, PhD
Professor of Medicine
Director, Center for Tobacco Control Research and Education
University of California, San Francisco
530 Parnassus Avenue, Suite 366
San Francisco, California 94143-1390

Dear Dr. Glantz:

The American Academy of Pediatrics is happy to express our continued support for efforts to make movies smokefree. The National Cancer Institute reported in 2008 that research shows youth who see smoking in movies are far more likely to start smoking, and this evidence proves there is a causal relationship between exposure to smoking in movies and youth smoking. To help alleviate this, the Academy endorses the four steps recommended by Smokefree Movies: certification that a production has not received a pay-off related to tobacco imagery; strong anti-smoking ads before a movie containing tobacco use; the elimination of brand identifiers in the production; and rating movies containing smoking as "R" with exceptions for portrayals that unambiguously depict the risks and negative consequences of tobacco use, or historically-accurate depictions of someone who actually used tobacco.

The AAP is concerned about the high number of states that subsidize television and film projects that contain smoking. As your research has demonstrated, 38 states currently offer production subsidies, 15 of which have recently subsidized top-grossing films that contained smoking. In 2010 alone, two-thirds (roughly \$288 million) of the US total public subsidies went towards making movies that contain smoking. This figure includes \$127 million that went towards the production of movies rated for youth. The 15 states that recently subsidized top-grossing movies in 2010 spent more on these productions than they did on their 2011 state tobacco control programs (\$288 million vs. \$280 million).

Current AAP policy on tobacco and child health states that local, state, and federal tax policies should support tobacco control. This policy is undermined when tax subsidies are used to support the production of movies that promote tobacco use. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that states stop subsidizing film projects that portray or contain smoking. Our position is shared by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the World Health Organization, both of which recommend that subsidies not be offered for projects containing smoking. By making such productions ineligible for any public benefit, states will be helping make a positive impact on decreasing smoking rates among youth.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "R. Block".

Robert W. Block, MD, FAAP
President

RWB/jb

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