



THE SOCIETY FOR ADOLESCENT MEDICINE

...a Multidisciplinary Organization of Health Professionals

October 8, 2003

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Dear Dr. Glantz:

The Society for Adolescent Medicine is pleased to endorse goals of the Smoke Free Movies project. As you know, tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable death in the United States, causing more than 440,000 deaths each year and resulting in more than \$75 billion in direct medical costs annually. More than three million young people (under age 18) smoke half a billion cigarettes each year and more than one-half of these adolescents consider themselves to be dependent on cigarettes. The decision to begin smoking is nearly always made during adolescence - approximately 80 percent of current adult smokers began smoking before age 18.

We agree with the American Medical Association that the use of smoking in movies is often gratuitous, serving only to glamorize and inappropriately reinforce smoking as a desirable behavior. Rather than promoting smoking, the American motion picture industry can and should play a critical role in efforts to prevent smoking among all adolescents domestically and abroad.

Specifically, the Society for Adolescent Medicine supports your four policy recommendations:

- **Certify no payoffs.** Movie producers should post a certificate in the credits at the end of movies declaring that no one on the production received anything of value in exchange for using or displaying tobacco products.
- **Stop identifying tobacco brands.** Tobacco brands should not be identified in movies, nor should brand images appear in action or background scenes (i.e., billboards).
- **Rate smoking movies "R."** The Rating Board should issue an "R" rating to any film that shows smoking or that uses tobacco advertisement and brand images. Such films could be rated less severely, however, if by a special vote the Rating Board feels that the presentation of tobacco use clearly and unambiguously reflects the dangers and consequences of tobacco use.
- **Require strong anti-smoking ads.** Studios and theaters should run anti-smoking advertising (not produced by tobacco companies) before any film with any tobacco presence, regardless of the film's rating.

We wish your project every success.

Sincerely,

Vaughn I. Rickert, PsyD, FSAM
President