

What the U.S. CENTERS for DISEASE CONTROL and PREVENTION just concluded about smoking in films

Last Friday, August 20, the CDC's Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report published data showing that on-screen tobacco incidents had dropped 51% from their 2005 peak, but a majority of 2009 films rated PG-13 still featured smoking. The Report concluded:

“EFFECTIVE METHODS to reduce the potential harmful influence of onscreen tobacco use should be implemented. Policies to decrease the negative effects on youths of onscreen depictions of smoking in movies have been recommended by the World Health Organization and endorsed by a number of public health and health professional organizations. **These include assigning R ratings to new movies that portray tobacco imagery.** An R rating policy would create an economic incentive for producers to leave smoking out of movies that are marketed to youths. A 2005 study concluded that the return on investment for

youth-rated movies was 70%, compared to 29% for R-rated movies. Reducing the number of movies containing tobacco incidents is expected to reduce the amount of onscreen smoking seen by youths and the associated likelihood that they will become smokers. **Complementary recommended policies include requiring strong antitobacco ads preceding movies that depict smoking, not allowing tobacco brand displays in movies, and requiring producers of movies depicting tobacco use to certify that no person or company associated with the production received any consideration for that depiction.**” [Emphasis added]

With this national health consensus, the undersigned again urge the U.S. film industry to adopt the R-rating for tobacco imagery.

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Download “Smoking in Top-Grossing Movies—United States, 1991-2009”
in the August 20, 2010 issue at cdc.gov/mmwr/mmwr_wk