MOVIES WITH SMOKING ARE TO LUNG CANCER WHAT MOSQUITOS ARE TO THE ZIKA VIRUS.

Diseases spread by mosquitoes take half a million lives a year. But on February 1, WHO also advised 180 countries to target another disease vector—commercial motion pictures spreading the tobacco epidemic, which takes 6 million lives a year.

Tobacco is the #1 cause of preventable death around the world. Unless we halt tobacco promotion, WHO projects that tobacco use will grow and cause one billion deaths in this century.

Tobacco addiction takes hold during adolescence, so steps to protect this age group are vital. They include shutting off the last unrestricted promotional channel reaching kids: youth-rated movies that feature tobacco imagery. The CDC reports that youth-rated films with smoking will recruit 3.2 million young US smokers in this generation, of whom one million will eventually die from tobacco-induced cancer, heart disease, stroke or emphysema.

Of course, Hollywood exports those same films around the world. Epidemiological studies in a dozen countries have found that US films are a major vector for youth smoking globally.


Download WHO’s public health advisory.

One little letter \( R \) will save a million lives. In the US alone.

Smoking in movies kills in real life. Smokefree Movie policies—the R-rating, anti-tobacco spots, certification of no payoffs, and an end to brand display—are endorsed by the World Health Organization, American Medical Association, American Academy of Pediatrics, American Heart Association, American Lung Association, Americans for Nonsmokers’ Rights, American Public Health Association, Breathe California, Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, Legacy, Los Angeles County Dept. of Public Health, New York State Dept. of Health, New York State PTA, and many others. This ad is sponsored by Smokefree Movies, UCSF School of Medicine, San Francisco, CA 94143-1390.

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