THE U.S. SURGEON GENERAL’S NEW STATEMENT ON MOVIE SMOKING:

The billions of impressions of tobacco use that movies deliver, combined with the fact that conventional cigarette advertising on television and radio has been banned since 1971, and...other forms of cigarette advertising directed at youth severely restricted since 1999 by the MSA, emphasizes the importance of on-screen smoking in the movies as one of the largest remaining unrestricted traditional media channels promoting smoking and tobacco use to youth. The 2012 Surgeon General’s report reviewed the historical links between the tobacco companies and the movie industry...

Based on box office attendance data, it has been estimated that youth were exposed to 14.9 billion in-theater tobacco-use impressions in youth-rated films in 2012. Youth who are exposed to images of smoking in movies are more likely to smoke; those who experience the most exposure to onscreen smoking are approximately twice as likely to begin smoking as those who receive the least exposure. Actions that would eliminate depiction of tobacco use in movies that are produced and rated as appropriate for children and adolescents could have a significant benefit in reducing the numbers of youth who become tobacco users. It has been suggested that the movie industry modernize the Motion Picture Association of America voluntary rating system to eliminate smoking from youth-rated films by awarding any film with smoking or other protobacco imagery an R rating (with exceptions for real historical figures who actually smoked or films that actually depict the dangers of smoking or exposure to secondhand smoke). Further, if such a change in the [MPAA] rating system would reduce in-theater exposures from a current median of about 275 annual exposures per adolescent from PG-13 movies down to approximately 10 or less, adolescent smoking would be reduced by an estimated 18%.

THE HEALTH CONSEQUENCES OF SMOKING: 50 YEARS OF PROGRESS
A REPORT OF THE SURGEON GENERAL, JANUARY 17, 2014
www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/reports/50-years-of-progress

Fifty years ago this month, the U.S. Surgeon General concluded that smoking causes lung cancer. Now the Surgeon General has re-confirmed that movies with smoking cause young people to smoke. Exposure to smoking in PG-13 movies has doubled since 2010, proof that individual film companies’ policies have not made young audiences safer. Only a consistent, industry-wide R-rating for smoking can avert a million future tobacco deaths among today’s kids. The U.S. film industry has no excuse left. R-rate tobacco now.