CONGRATULATIONS TO EVERYONE ELSE IN THE FILM INDUSTRY...EXCEPT COMCAST’S UNIVERSAL AND DISNEY’S FOX.

Four major studios, and the independents, have quietly cut moviegoers’ exposure to smoking in kid-rated films by 93%. Only Fox and Universal have boosted exposure, undoing the industry’s progress and multiplying kids’ risk of tobacco addiction, disability and early death.

BAR CHART | CHANGE IN TOBACCO EXPOSURES DELIVERED TO DOMESTIC AUDIENCES BY TOP-GROSSING, YOUTH-RATED FILMS, 2002 to 2018

The US film industry has known since 2003 that the more smoking young people see on screen, the more likely they are to smoke.

In 2007, thirty-two state Attorneys General told studios that each time they released another movie with smoking, they did so “with the full knowledge of the harm it will bring to children who watch it.”

In 2016, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention projected that onscreen smoking will recruit 6.2 million of today’s kids to smoke, of whom two million will die from tobacco disease.

By 2018, most of the film industry had faced up to the challenge.

Two-thirds of MPAA-members, and the indies, have cut the toxic tobacco impressions their kid-rated films deliver to domestic audiences by 93 percent, from 17 billion in 2002 to 1.2 billion in 2018 (bar chart).

Comcast and Fox stand out as stark exceptions: In 2002, their kid-rated films delivered 1.2 billion tobacco impressions to moviegoers, six percent of the industry total. In 2018, they delivered 9.2 billion impressions, 88 percent of the industry total.

In the process, Comcast and Fox have undercut Hollywood’s progress in making kid-rated movies safe for kids, tripling total kid-rated tobacco exposures from 2.9 billion, in 2015, to 10.3 billion in 2018.

All these numbers add up to one thing: Without a transparent R-rating that covers all companies, kids worldwide remain at high risk.

And as long as any children are at risk, so is the entire industry.

One little letter R will save a million lives.