SIX MAJOR HOLLYWOOD STUDIOS JUST MADE THE CASE FOR R-RATING TOBACCO.

Reducing kids’ exposure to on-screen smoking is official, national health policy. But in 2011, reversing five years of progress, Hollywood studios boosted tobacco incidents in PG and PG-13 movies by 34% overall. And kid-rated movies exposed audiences to 10.7 billion tobacco impressions — double the number in 2010.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) published a report last week that three MPAA-member studios — Disney, Universal, and Warner Bros. — led the 2011 rebound. Ironically, these three companies boast corporate policies against screen smoking and all but eliminated tobacco from their youth-rated movies in 2010.

Paramount and Fox had nothing to brag about either. Their youth-rated movies averaged nearly twice as much smoking as Universal and Warner Bros. films. Sony reduced smoking in its youth-rated movies by 32 percent in 2011. Still, its PG and PG-13 movies delivered 1.1 billion tobacco impressions to theater audiences, more than twice as many as Disney, Universal and Warner Bros. combined in 2010.

The closely-watched report on Hollywood’s tobacco performance comes out only months after the U.S. Surgeon General decisively concluded that screen smoking causes kids to smoke. It also follows a letter from more than three dozen state Attorneys General, telling movie studio heads that “the bottom line is that action needs to be taken, now.”

The only answer left? An industrywide R-rating for future movies with smoking.

Every major Hollywood studio just showed America that nothing else will stick.

Read the full CDC journal article — Smoking in Top-Grossing US Movies, 2011. Preventing Chronic Disease 2012:9:120170 (Sept. 27, 2012) — at 1.usa.gov/0Xmn19