A Parent’s Guide to Smoking, Movies and Children’s Health

ACTION UPDATE:
WHY HOLLYWOOD NEEDS TO HEAR FROM YOU NOW!

THIS PROJECT ENDORSED BY

American Heart Association
Learn and Live

Legacy
American Legacy Foundation

AAMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

DOH
STATE OF NEW YORK DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
Dear parents (and others who care about kids):

Tobacco is America’s #1 cause of preventable death. So what should parents do to protect their children?

A decade of scientific research points to a very powerful answer: **Reduce your kids’ exposure to smoking in movies.** The reason is stunningly simple. Smoking on the silver screen influences more U.S. teens to begin smoking than any other kind of tobacco promotion.

Exposure to on-screen smoking starts half of all teen smokers, an estimated 390,000 each year. Movies feed the tobacco industry almost enough fresh smokers to replace the 438,000 adults killed by tobacco annually.

The problem for parents? It’s now almost impossible to avoid smoking on screen. Three in four PG-13 movies include tobacco. According to the latest studies, smoking in movies plays a larger role overall than whether a child participates in sports or has friends who smoke. In fact, Hollywood movies with smoking are more powerful than a parent’s own personal example.

**On-screen smoking is one of the gravest threats that kids 10 and over will ever encounter.** Tobacco kills more Americans than criminal violence, drunk driving, illicit drugs and HIV/AIDS — the “11 O’Clock News causes” — combined. The good news? Chances are excellent that kids who graduate high school as nonsmokers will be nonsmokers for life.

Why should parents make their voices heard in Hollywood? Because that’s exactly what Hollywood has told us will bring about real change. Whether your own kids are in Grade 1 or Grade 12, you can help prevent as many as 60,000 future tobacco deaths a year by taking the survival steps outlined in this special **SCREEN OUT!** parent’s guide.

This guide will **change the way you look at movies…and the movie industry.** Most important, it will help you succeed in protecting your kids from tobacco, America’s #1 cause of preventable death.

Best wishes,

Cass Wheeler
CEO
American Heart Association

Cheryl Heaton, Dr.P.H.
President & CEO
American Legacy Foundation

Ronald M. Davis, MD
President
American Medical Association
Still the #1 cause of preventable death.

Tobacco kills 438,000 Americans every year.\(^1\) That makes smoking the #1 cause of preventable death in the United States. Tobacco is also marketed aggressively overseas. If present trends continue, tobacco will kill 650 million of the 1.3 billion smokers around the world.\(^2\)

Tobacco kills through cardiovascular disease (heart attacks and stroke), by triggering cancer of the lung, throat, mouth, cervix and kidney, and by compromising lung capacity. Secondhand smoke is a major factor in Sudden Infant Death Syndrome and causes asthma attacks, heart attacks, lung cancer and breast cancer in nonsmokers.\(^3\)

In addition to the hundreds of thousands who die yearly, as many as 10.5 million other Americans suffer long-term disability — chronic bronchitis, emphysema, heart disease and cancer from tobacco smoke.\(^4\) Annual medical costs and productivity losses due to tobacco disability and death tops $167 billion a year\(^5\) or $1,250 per American wage earner.\(^6\)

Meanwhile, major cigarette companies spent more than $13 billion on U.S. advertising and promotion in the most recent year reported.\(^7\)

How many U.S. kids smoke?

Seventy percent of kids try smoking. One in three of these kids becomes a regular smoker. Three-quarters of high school students who smoke daily report they’ve tried to quit. Only one in six succeeds.\(^8\)

Eighty percent of U.S. smokers begin smoking by age 18.\(^9\) Today, one in twelve middle school students are cigarette smokers. More than one in five high school students, boys and girls alike, smoke cigarettes regularly.\(^10\) There are now at least three million U.S. smokers under 18.\(^11\) Unless quit-smoking programs are strengthened, tobacco will kill 960,000 of them.\(^12\)

Smoking hurts kids as soon as they start.

Damage from smoking starts immediately. Once kids start smoking, they are more likely to lose teeth, experience shortness of breath and accelerated heart rate, catch the flu, and have a chronic cough. They are also more tense, suffer more frequent headaches, and lose hearing and vision—compared to nonsmokers.\(^13\)

(See "Reference" page for sources.)
What smoking in movies does to our kids.

Movie smoking more powerful than traditional tobacco ads.

Kids whose favorite actors have smoked in three or more of their recent films are sixteen times more likely to feel positively about smoking — making them much more likely to start smoking themselves.¹

Kids 10-14 who see the most smoking on screen are nearly three times more likely to start smoking than kids who see the least. There is a direct relationship between kids’ exposure and how many of them start to smoke: the more on-screen smoking they see, the more likely they will smoke. The less they see, the less likely they will smoke.²

Experts estimate that movies featuring tobacco start half of all new teen smokers, 390,000 each year. Of this number, a projected 120,000 will later die from smoking. This is more Americans than will die from drunk driving, homicide, suicide, drugs and HIV/AIDS combined. R-rating future movie smoking should cut youth exposure in half, saving as many as 60,000 lives a year.³

The scientific case is rock solid.

Research studies over the last ten years have established that on-screen smoking strongly influences young people.⁴ The research that has won the most attention followed more than 2,000 New England middle and high school students for two years. The study took all other factors known to predict whether adolescents smoke into account: age, grades in school, parenting style, risk-taking, parents and siblings who smoke, friends who smoke — more than a dozen in all. After controlling for all these other factors, the study found that exposure to smoking on screen made the most difference in who started to smoke and who did not.⁵

This research method — a “longitudinal” study that follows subjects through time — is considered the gold standard. When combined with the findings in other studies, such large-scale, long-term studies prove it’s no coincidence or mere association. Exposure to smoking on screen causes kids to smoke.

In November 2005, the same research team who followed the New England students also reported on a nationwide survey of 10-14 year olds. “Our findings indicate that all U.S. adolescents, regardless of race or place of residence, have a higher risk of trying smoking as their exposure to movies increases,” concluded the study’s lead investigator.

The director of the National Cancer Institute’s Division of Cancer Control and Population Sciences remarked: “Now we need to consider effective ways to reduce youths’ exposure to this preventable risk factor.”⁶
Smoking in movies today is hard to avoid.

As you may have noticed, a lot of today’s movies have smoking in them. In fact, almost 90 percent of R-rated movies since 1999 include tobacco images; 75 percent of PG-13 movies; and more than one-third rated G and PG.¹

Even though half as many American adults smoke now as in 1950, there’s again as much smoking on screen as there was half a century ago.² Smoking in movies declined after the U.S. Surgeon General linked tobacco to lung cancer in 1964. But by the early 1970s, after the U.S. banned tobacco ads on TV, the tobacco companies were systematically using product placement and other techniques to boost smoking in Hollywood movies.

Paid product placement by major domestic tobacco companies (but not their international affiliates) was prohibited in a 1998 agreement with top law enforcement officials. Yet on-screen smoking is still on the rise — and favors the brands that kids start smoking first. Since 2000, the majority of tobacco impressions delivered to audiences has shifted from R-rated to kid-rated movies. Think PG-13 films and DVDs are safe? They’re not.

Are some studios better than others?

The major studios that produce and distribute most U.S. movies (Disney, Fox, Paramount, Columbia, Universal, and Warner Bros.) differ mainly in the number of movies they release, not in their smoking content. But note this:

**Three media corporations—Time Warner, Disney, and Sony—account for the majority of all U.S. movies with smoking.**

In the last eight years, Disney, Sony, and Viacom (Paramount) had the highest percentage of PG-13 movies with smoking: 79-81 percent. Disney, which owns Touchstone and Miramax, also had the highest proportion of R-rated movies with smoking: 92 percent. Sixty-one percent of Sony’s G/PG movies — and half of those from GE (Universal) — featured tobacco.

What about movies in theaters and on video now?

In the fall of 2007, the MPAA began to mention tobacco in some of its rating labels. But not all smoking is labeled and labels giving the reason for ratings don’t always appear in theater ads. The surest way for parents to tell if the week’s top ten films and videos include smoking is online: www.smokefreemovies.ucsf.edu/problem/now_showing.html
Countries threatened by movies that push smoking may arrive at different solutions. For example, the Health Ministry in India — representing one-sixth of the world’s population — proposes to bar smoking in all future Indian films and TV shows.

In America, where the First Amendment keeps government out of film content, the movie industry itself runs a robust rating system. This voluntary system can be used to cut kids’ exposure in half while leaving filmmakers free to include smoking in any movie they choose. How?

1. **Rate new smoking movies R.** Film studios routinely tune the content of films to win the rating they want for commercial reasons. They should treat smoking (which kills fifty Americans an hour) exactly the way they treat offensive, but non-lethal, four-letter words:

   Any film that shows or implies tobacco should be rated R. The only exceptions should be when the presentation of tobacco clearly and unambiguously reflects the dangers and consequences of tobacco use or is necessary to represent the smoking of a real historical figure. Films released before the rating system is updated would not be re-rated.

   The net effect? Producers would voluntarily keep smoking out of films they want rated PG-13 to attract a bigger audience, just as they tone down violence and sex for a PG-13 rating today. While kids would still be exposed by the R-rated films they manage to see, overall their exposure should be cut at least in half. This can avert as many as 60,000 future tobacco deaths a year.

2. **Certify no payoffs.** The producers should post a certificate in closing credits declaring that nobody on the production received anything of value (cash money, free cigarettes or other gifts, free publicity, interest-free loans or anything else) from anyone in exchange for using or displaying tobacco.

3. **Require strong anti-smoking ads.** Studios and theaters should require a genuinely strong anti-smoking ad (not one produced by a tobacco company) to run before any film with tobacco presence, in any distribution channel, regardless of rating.

4. **Stop identifying tobacco brands.** There should be no tobacco brand identification nor the presence of tobacco brand imagery (such as billboards) in the background of any movie scene.
Since 2002, the U.S. Senate has held hearings about smoking in movies... state Attorneys General have met with the production chiefs of every major studio... high school students across New York State have sent 300,000 letters to their favorite Hollywood stars... and the film industry’s leaders have been fully briefed on the latest health research.

**Hollywood’s response? “We don’t think parents care.”**

It will only take you a few minutes to let Hollywood know how much parents care... if you compose your own letter *and* send it to the right people. This kit includes model letters and the addresses you need. The diagram below maps the most important places to make your voice heard.

1) Write ONE letter to the top executive of Time Warner, Disney or Sony. COPY this letter to the other two companies AND to Hollywood’s lobbying group, the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA).

2) Write a SECOND letter to the local theater where you and your kids watch movies. Then COPY this letter to the theater chain’s headquarters AND to the theaters’ trade association, the National Organization of Theatre Owners (NATO).

**Answer? The parent-to-“parent” campaign.**

All major Hollywood studios (like Warner Bros.) are owned by a *parent* company (like Time Warner). These parent companies own lots of other media — cable channels, TV networks, satellite services, magazines and newspapers — you may buy every day.

The way to change the way studios behave is through their “parent” corporations.

The same goes for your local movie theater. Almost all movie theaters belong to regional or national chains.

To convince movie studios to keep smoking out of kid-rated movies, we need to squeeze from both ends: from the top of their own corporate ladder and from the theater chains that sell their product to the public.

Write the parent companies that own the major studios. Contact local theaters that show their movies. Show them all how much parents really care.
# How to make a big impression on Hollywood.

1) Write one Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of a Top Three media company. A model letter is included in this kit. 2) Copy (cc:) the same letter to the heads of of the two other other media companies. 3) Copy the same letter to Dan Glickman, president of the MPAA (address at left).

FYI: We also include all the other key industry names, for reference.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Media Company</th>
<th>CEO Name</th>
<th>Company Name</th>
<th>Address 1</th>
<th>Address 2</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time Warner</td>
<td>Richard Parsons</td>
<td>TIME WARNER</td>
<td>1 Time Warner Center</td>
<td>New York, NY 10019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disney</td>
<td>Robert Iger (from 10/05)</td>
<td>THE DISNEY COMPANY</td>
<td>500 S. Buena Vista St. Burbank, CA 91521-9722</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sony</td>
<td>Sir Howard Stringer</td>
<td>SONY CORPORATION</td>
<td>550 Madison Avenue</td>
<td>New York, NY 10022</td>
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<td>News Corp.</td>
<td>Rupert Murdoch</td>
<td>THE NEWS CORPORATION</td>
<td>1211 Avenue of the Americas</td>
<td>New York, NY 10036</td>
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<td>Viacom</td>
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<td>Universal</td>
<td>Robert C. Wright</td>
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<td>30 Rockefeller Plaza</td>
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The MPAA is the U.S. film industry’s lobbying arm. It battles film piracy, for example, and also maintains the movie rating system. The rating system has been revised and updated over the years to reflect changing standards. In May 2007, under pressure, the MPAA announced it would start mentioning tobacco on some rating labels. Health authorities have rejected this policy as inadequate. Tell MPAA chief Dan Glickman that parents feel the same way. Copy him on your letters to the parent companies.
After writing media CEOs, groups should write to local movie theater managers (model letter included in kit). Arrange a face-to-face meeting to express concerns and describe solutions. Equally important? Copy (cc:) your letters “upstairs” to the theater chain’s headquarters, listed here, and to NATO, the movie theater trade association (lower left).

Smoking doesn’t sell movie tickets. Why should theaters defend it?

**AMC**
5,300 screens: Loews Cineplex, Cineplex Odeon, Star, Magic Johnson
- Peter C. Brown, Pres.
AMC Entertainment
920 Main Street
Kansas City, MO 64105

**CARMIKE**
2,500 screens in smaller markets
- Michael W. Patrick, Pres.
Carmike Cinemas
1301 First Avenue
Columbus, GA 31901

**CINEMARK**
4,500 screens
- Lee Roy Mitchell, CEO
Cinemark
3900 Dallas Parkway, Suite 500
Plano, TX 75093

**CINEPLEX**
1,300 screens across Canada: Odeon, Galaxy, Famous Players, etc.
- Ellis Jacob, Pres. & CEO
1303 Yonge Street
Toronto, Ontario
M4T 2Y9

**LANDMARK THEATRES**
240 screens
- Kevin Parke, Pres. & CEO
2222 S. Barrington Ave.
Los Angeles, CA 90064

**MARCUS THEATRES**
500 screens in upper Midwest
- Bruce J. Olson, Pres.
Marcus Theatres
100 East Wisconsin Ave., Suite 1900
Milwaukee, WI 53202

**NATIONAL AMUSEMENTS**
1,100 screens: Showcase, Multiplex, The Bridge, De Lux
- Shari E. Redstone, Pres.
National Amusements
200 Elm Street
Dedham, MA 02026
(Also owns Paramount, CBS, Viacom)

**PACIFIC THEATRES**
300 screens in Southern California
- Christopher Forman, CEO
Pacific Theatres
120 N. Robertson Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90048

**REGAL CINEMAS**
6,400 screens: Regal, Edwards, UA, Hoyts
- Michael L. Campbell, CEO
Regal Cinemas
7132 Regal Lane
Knoxville, TN 37918

**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF THEATRE OWNERS**
John Fithian,
Exec. Director
NATO
750 First St., NE
Washington D.C.
20002

Make sure that NATO gets a copy of the letter you send local theaters. They pay attention to the community.

**EMPIRE THEATRES**
375 screens across Canada
- Stuart G. Fraser, Pres. & CEO
610 East River Road
New Glasgow, Nova Scotia
B2H 3S2

**KERASOTES THEATRES**
800 screens in Midwest
- Tony Kerasotes, CEO
Kerasotes Theatres
224 N. Des Plaines, Suite 200
Chicago, IL 60661

**More theater chains:**
http://www.insightcinema.org/
ResourceGuide.html
1. WRITE LETTERS: Your name can help save 60,000 lives a year.

E-mail is quick. But the big media companies really pay attention to the number of original letters they receive. The reason? If you take the time to write a letter, the companies know you care deeply. If 10,000 people write their own letters, that’s a very big deal. The companies assume a million others care, too.

Follow the road map and you will make a difference. We need to show the studios and their owners that there’s no way out of this problem except to do the right thing.

So write a thoughtful, reasoned letter, no matter how brief. Copy it to the suggested targets, then sign your name. If you take a few minutes to put your heart into it, you can make the biggest corporations stop and think.

2. SIGN THE GLOBAL PETITION: Join people from around the world.

Why do people around the world care about smoking in movies? They’re watching millions of kids start to smoke — and fear what that means for the future. Any parent, teacher, health professional or young person can sign the global Smokefree Movies Action Network petition on the Web: www.thepetitionsite.com/takeaction/870523336. Your privacy is fully protected. Spread the word through Instant Messaging networks!

3. GROUPS CAN RUN ADS: Individuals can submit guest editorials.

Press-ready ads and op-ed articles included in this kit excite your community to meet this health emergency. From school newsletters to film festival programs to local newspapers, use this material to shape the public dialogue about smoking in movies. Try “earned” media first: op-ed language tailored to your audience. Can’t get the right coverage for free? Attract it with a paid ad. The movie studios do!

4. EDUCATE AT THEATERS: Movie smoking kills in real life.

Theaters showing kid-rated movies with smoking are a problem, but they’re also an opportunity for adult and student groups. Leaflets or palm cards that ask, “How much smoking do you see in this movie?” help moviegoers take notice — and come to their own conclusions. Of course, if they want to know more, you’ll be glad to tell them! This relaxed approach should earn theater managers’ tolerance, even cooperation. And you can use this kind of activity to earn press coverage, too.
How parents can protect kids from smoking in current films.

1. Know what kids are watching.

Along with TV programs like *E.R.* that show lots of smoking, kids watch rented videos, borrow DVDs from friends, maybe even download movies. If families don’t always watch together, ask about kids’ favorite movies and what stars they like best. And don’t hesitate to tell kids what you think about smoking — on-screen *and* in real life.

2. Keep track of new films and videos with smoking.

Assume that most of the movies promoted to kids have smoking in them. Want to know for sure? The smoking status of the top ten movies and videos is updated every Friday at smokefreemovies.ucsf.edu/problem/now_showing.html. For example:

![Smoking status chart]

3. Limit kids’ exposure to R-rated films.

Whatever adults might feel about the language, violence or sexual content in R-rated movies, 90 percent of these films also include tobacco content dangerous to children and adolescents. The average R-rated film with smoking shows twice as much smoking as a typical PG-13 movie with smoking. While two-thirds of the films seen by teens are rated PG-13 at most, they still get half of their tobacco exposure from R-rated films.

No rating system is 100 percent effective. Studies by the U.S. Federal Trade Commission and private audience research services find the R-rating is about 50 percent effective at keeping kids out of R-rated movies. Meanwhile, research has found that parents who enforce the R-rating themselves dramatically cut their kids’ risk of smoking.

Until Hollywood is convinced to clear smoking out of the PG-13 movies most teens see most often, however, today’s R-rating is only half the answer.
1. 60,000 fewer tobacco deaths a year, in the future.

Keeping tobacco out of future kid-rated movies will eliminate about half of kid’s exposure — and cut teen smoking rates substantially. Experts estimate that 390,000 kids are influenced to smoke by on-screen smoking each year. R-rating future films with smoking should reduce that number by 50 percent, averting as many as 60,000 U.S. tobacco deaths a year in decades to come.

With one simple change, a handful of media executives can achieve the equivalent of ending all U.S. deaths from car accidents and HIV/AIDS. Wouldn’t you do that if you had the chance?

2. Filmmakers can still include smoking in any film.

The R-rating and other policies do not censor content. The government is not involved. The film industry will simply include smoking imagery — known to be lethal — in its rating system along with strong language, violent images and sexual content. If filmmakers believe smoking is essential, they can still include it. But, just like four letter words, vivid violence or sexual situations do now, promoting tobacco will earn the movie an R.

Hollywood already claims to R-rate scenes of teenage smoking to discourage such imagery. When all smoking in films is rated R, there need not be more R-rated films — just fewer kid-rated films with smoking!

3. Tobacco industry will lose $2 billion in sales.

Experts calculate that the new young smokers influenced by smoking in movies each year are worth $4.1 billion to the tobacco industry in lifetime sales revenue (net present value). If keeping tobacco out of kid-rated films averts half of those addictions, then the tobacco industry stands to lose half of those sales, worth $2 billion. And that’s just in the United States. Hollywood, like the U.S. tobacco industry, makes half of its sales overseas. The impact of on-screen smoking promotion on other nations and cultures is incalculable.

4. No impact on Hollywood or the movie experience.

Nobody goes to the movies to watch people smoke. Nobody has ever left a movie thinking that it should have had more smoking in it. And classic films like Casablanca will not be affected in any way.

Smoking doesn’t sell movie tickets. All it sells is smoking. What’s in it for the studios?
Dear Mr. BLANK, CEO of Company A:

I’m a parent and I’m very concerned about the smoking in films rated G, PG and PG-13. I’ve learned that on-screen smoking is a major influence on teens in the United States. It’s more powerful than traditional tobacco ads and undermines all attempts by parents like me to keep my kids safe from tobacco, America’s #1 cause of preventable death.

Your motion picture studio has a poor record on smoking in kid-rated movies. I’m convinced that the movies you produce and distribute are dangerous to children and adolescents. Major health groups agree.

There’s an easy way to solve this problem. You already tailor films to meet certain age standards on language, sex and violence. It’s at least as important to rate them according to their smoking content — the only content scientifically proven to physically harm young people. In fact, experts have estimated that your films influence [insert #] kids a year to smoke!

Now that the rest of us know how harmful these images are, I demand that you pledge to stop producing or distributing G, PG and PG-13 rated movies with smoking, in future, and push the MPAA to rate smoking “R” across the industry.

That’s a reasonable but effective answer to this terrible health challenge. If you do any less, you risk losing the trust and respect of parents across America. I know. I’m one of them.

Please tell me how soon your company will end smoking in youth-rated movies. I will be following your actions closely.

Sincerely,

cc: CEO, Company B
    CEO, Company C
    Dan Glickman, Motion Picture Association of America
Dear [Local Theater Manager]:

Our organization is deeply concerned about the smoking in G, PG and PG-13 films shown by your theater. We know that you don’t personally choose the movies shown. But your screens are directly exposing our community to tobacco imagery that influences kids to smoke.

This is not a problem of “taste” or morals. It’s a public health issue. Smoking is even more of a hazard on screen than if you allowed smoking in the theater itself. The science is undeniable. Smoking in movies has a major impact on U.S. teens. Researchers estimate that it influences 390,000 to start smoking each year, of whom a projected 120,000 will die from tobacco addiction.

The studios will listen if you tell them that our community cares about this issue. Explain that R-rating the smoking in future films is the best solution. A PG-13 tobacco “warning” would only cut teens’ exposure by 5 percent. Clearing all smoking from films would require censorship nobody in America wants. What’s reasonable? Treat tobacco, which kills 438,000 Americans a year, as seriously as the MPAA now treats four-letter words that kill no one.

When you report box office numbers, remind the studios that movie smoking doesn’t sell a single movie ticket. It only sells smoking. Studio veterans know this already. Why should theaters take the heat when the studios push tobacco at kids 12-17, the age group most likely to start smoking?

We welcome the chance to work together and end this problem. Let’s set a time to meet.

Cordially,

cc: [CEO, THEATER CHAIN]

John Fithian, National Organization of Theatre Owners
Whereas tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable death and disability in the United States;

Whereas youth ages 12-20 are one-sixth of the U.S. population but buy one-quarter of all movie tickets;

Whereas most U.S. movies with tobacco imagery are rated G, PG or PG-13, and three-quarters of all U.S. live-action films rated PG-13 and 36 percent of films rated G or PG released 1999-2006 feature tobacco;

Whereas exposure to smoking in movies is the primary influence on half of all new adolescent smokers;

Whereas each year an estimated 390,000 teens start smoking because of exposure to smoking in movies and 120,000 will die prematurely as a result;

Whereas the tobacco industry has had a long, documented history of promoting tobacco use and particular brands on screen, while obscuring its true role;

Whereas the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in 2002, 2003 and 2005 listed smoking in movies as a primary reason why the decline in teen smoking rates has stalled;

Whereas the World Health Organization, American Medical Association, National PTA, American Heart Association, American Lung Association, American Legacy Foundation, American Academy of Pediatrics, American Academy of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology, Society for Adolescent Medicine, L.A. County Department of Health Services and others endorse getting smoking out of movies rated G, PG and PG-13;

Now, therefore be it resolved that [NAME OF ORGANIZATION] of [LOCATION] endorses the four objectives of the Smoke Free Movies campaign:

(1) Rate new smoking movies “R,” with the sole exceptions being when the tobacco presentation clearly and unambiguously reflects the dangers and consequences of tobacco use or is necessary to represent smoking of a real historical figure; (2) require producers to certify on screen that no one on the production received anything of value in consideration for using or displaying tobacco; (3) require strong anti-smoking ads before any movie with tobacco use, regardless of rating; (4) stop identifying tobacco brands.

Be it further resolved that the [ORGANIZATION EXECUTIVE] shall write letters to theaters in this community asking that they refrain from showing G/PG/PG-13 films with tobacco imagery or, if they do, to admit patrons on the same terms as if the film were rated “R.”
It’s easy to make fun of people who blame Hollywood for everything. After all, movies are merely entertainment. Movie studios are neither missionary chapels nor outposts of political correctness. They’re businesses. As a producer once remarked, “We don’t make movies. We make money.”

But, since they’re businesses, why not hold them to normal business standards? For example, it’s almost universally considered bad form for a business to sell a product that kills its own customers — or their kids.

Unfortunately, scientific evidence now indicates that movie studios are doing massive harm. While it’s the tobacco industry whose products kill 438,000 Americans a year, it’s exposure to smoking in Hollywood movies that generates 390,000 new teen smokers a year to replace them. Experts project that 120,000 of these kids will ultimately die from tobacco-caused heart disease, emphysema or cancer.

Smoking takes its toll on the rest of us, too. Counting lost productivity and medical expenses, tobacco costs every American wage-earner $1,250 a year.

We believe the movie studios account for so many future tobacco deaths because 75 percent of all live-action films since 1999 have included smoking. Tobacco is even featured in three-quarters of PG-13 movies, the kind adolescents see most.

Studies controlling for every other conceivable factor find that kids 10-14 who see the most movies with smoking are three times as likely to start smoking as kids who see the least. Nonsmokers’ children may be the most vulnerable; they’re four times as likely to start smoking after watching lots of smoking on screen.

But you don’t need to take the word of independent researchers publishing in the world’s most respected medical journals. Read tobacco industry files dating back to 1971. They describe how tobacco companies set out to systematically boost their products in major motion pictures. They figured out that they didn’t even have to flash a particular brand. Seeing any kind of smoking in movies would keep it “fashionable.”

To put tobacco on screen, the companies invested millions in product placement until at least the early 1990s, when the paper trail disappears off shore. When some of their deals were discovered, they tried to launch a Nick Naylor-esque defense, claiming that restrictions on paid tobacco placement would threaten creative freedom.

With so many lives at stake, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention are urging the movie industry to change its practices. Leading medical groups, including the American Academy of Pediatricians, the AMA and others join the World Health Organization in recommending a voluntary R-rating for future films with smoking. (Note the word “future.” Nobody is going to touch classics like *Casablanca* or *The Hot Chick.*)

This and other policies, like an anti-tobacco spot before any movie with smoking, are reasonable and responsible. Filmmakers would remain free to include smoking in any movie they want, just as they can use the f-word in any movie they want. Realistic depictions of smoking’s real consequences—and film portraits of historical smokers like Winston Churchill or Ray Charles—would be exempt. The government need not be involved at all, yet taxpayers would save billions.

The R-rating alone will cut teen exposure to movie smoking in half and avert as many as 60,000 tobacco deaths a year in decades to come, more than all Americans killed by car crashes and drug use combined. The six top media CEOs can pick up their phones and make it happen today. Why not? Nobel Prizes have been won for less.
[DATE] — With kids back in school, [PLACE] parents and pediatricians are launching a first-ever campaign to alert the public to the dangers of tobacco scenes in mainstream movies. Recent studies find that exposure to on-screen smoking is the primary influence on teens to start smoking. Campaigners aim to warn parents of unlabeled tobacco content, enlist local movie theaters in educational efforts, and update the movie industry’s rating system to keep smoking out of future G, PG and PG-13 films.

“Dramatic risks to kids like violence, drugs and drunk driving are tragic enough. Yet tobacco remains America’s #1 cause of preventable death,” says [PERSON #1]. “On-screen smoking alone will kill as many of today’s kids as car wrecks, crime, drug use and HIV/AIDS combined.”

The good news, according to co-organizer [PERSON #2], is that kids who don’t smoke when they graduate high school will likely stay nonsmokers for life. But research shows that smoking in movies cancels out parents’ efforts to keep their teens away from tobacco.

“Nonsmokers’ kids are as susceptible to smoking scenes at the multiplex than kids whose parents smoke,” [PERSON #2] says. “A parent’s example isn’t enough in this case. We need to get smoking out of future kid-rated movies, using Hollywood’s own voluntary rating system.”

The campaign will ask local theater managers to relay community concerns to the film industry. Letter-writing to media company CEOs and talks to local PTAs and other civic groups are also slated. All can sign the global petition online at www.thepetitionsite.com/takeaction/870523336.

“This is bigger than [PLACE],” notes [PERSON #1]. “Parents and pediatricians around the world are putting this issue on the agenda. If one child dies on a theme park ride it makes national news, but 120,000 future deaths a year from movie smoking are business as usual. Compared to other major public health problems, this can be fixed quickly at no public cost. Even with the history of product placement, that makes Hollywood’s continuing denial very hard to understand.”
Want to learn more about children, smoking and movies? Here are some web sites with top-notch information, constantly updated:

**www.smokefreemovies.ucsf.edu** Based at the University of California-San Francisco, this site offers full-text research studies, secret tobacco industry documents, and complete surveys of smoking content and impact, broken out by studio, since 1999. Check out the links to other groups.

**www.scenesmoking.org** Sponsored by the Lung Association of Sacramento-Emigrant Trails, this site updates its info on top-grossing movies and videos every week. Archives reach back to the early 1990s.

**www.cdc.gov/tobacco/index.htm** Fact sheets and reports on every aspect of tobacco, from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

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"Tobacco is the most deadly product..."


5 CDC


The problem...

1. Tobacco is still the #1 cause of preventable death in the U.S. This year, smoking will kill 438,000 Americans.

2. Most smokers start when they’re kids — some as young as 10. The number who start smoking climbs through middle school and peaks in high school.

3. Tobacco is one of the biggest health threats your kids will ever face. Smoking in movies is a primary promotional channel.

4. One major study found exposure to on-screen smoking is the primary influence on half of all the kids who start to smoke.

5. Published estimates say that movies will influence 390,000 U.S. teens to start smoking this year — nearly enough to replace all adult smokers killed by tobacco.

6. Of those new young smokers, experts project 120,000 will ultimately be killed by their tobacco addiction.

7. That’s more than all Americans killed by drunk drivers, crime, drug use and HIV/AIDS every year.

8. The study also found that on-screen smoking influenced nonsmokers’ children to start smoking even more than it influenced the children of parents who smoke.

9. Movie smoking is almost impossible to avoid. Three-quarters of U.S. live-action films feature tobacco, including three out of four PG-13 films, which most parents think are safe.

10. For ten years, health groups tried to educate Hollywood about the harm from smoking in movies. Over that time, smoking in movies only increased.

Smoking in movies kills in real life.
How can we protect our kids from smoking in movies?

1 RATE NEW SMOKING MOVIES “R” Movie studios routinely tune film content to win the rating they want for commercial reasons. They should treat smoking (which kills close to one American each minute) exactly the way they treat four-letter words:

Any film that shows or implies tobacco should be rated “R”. The only exceptions should be when the presentation of tobacco clearly and unambiguously reflects the dangers and consequences of tobacco use or is necessary to represent the smoking of a real historical figure. Films released before the rating system change would not be re-rated.

Result? Producers will keep smoking out of films they want rated PG-13 to attract a bigger audience, just like they tone down violence and sex today. While kids would still see smoking in the R-rated films they manage to view, their overall exposure should be cut at least in half. Cutting exposure in half could avert as many as 60,000 U.S. tobacco deaths annually.

2 CERTIFY NO PAYOFFS Producers of films with tobacco should post a certificate in the closing credits declaring that nobody on the production received anything of value (cash money, free cigarettes or other gifts, free publicity, interest-free loans or anything else) from anyone in exchange for using or displaying tobacco.

3 REQUIRE STRONG ANTI-SMOKING ADS Studios and theaters should run a genuinely strong anti-smoking ad (not one produced by a tobacco company) before any film with tobacco presence, in any distribution channel, regardless of the film’s rating.

When you contact theaters and theater chains, emphasize that strong anti-tobacco spots must show before all films with smoking.

4 STOP SHOWING TOBACCO BRANDS There should be no tobacco brand identification nor the presence of tobacco brand imagery (such as billboards) in the background of any movie scene.

R-rating tobacco in future movies is endorsed by leading health groups, but the rating system is controlled by major movie studios. That means a handful of media executives have the power to reduce dramatically our kids’ exposure to on-screen smoking, saving as many as 60,000 U.S. lives a year in decades to come.
What parents can do NOW...

The two most effective things you can do to protect your kids:

1. **Limit Kids’ Exposure to R-Rated Movies**

   As children grow, they are more likely to see movies rated “R.” They have access to them on DVD, on cable and in movie theaters. Even after theaters stiffened enforcement of the R-rating after the shootings in Columbine, CO (out of concern over violent imagery) the U.S. Federal Trade Commission found the “R” was about 50 percent successful at keeping kids under 17 out of R-rated screenings.

   Still, even older kids see only half as many R-rated movies as youth-rated films. Unfortunately, R-rated movies average twice as much smoking as PG-13 movies. Result? Kids 12-17 receive half of their smoking exposure from R-rated movies. Limiting your kids’ exposure to R-rated films can protect many from starting to smoke. But as long as kids get half of their exposure from youth-rated movies, today’s “R” is only half the answer.

2. **Clear Smoking Out of G, PG and, Most Importantly, PG-13 Movies**

   The best way to stop tobacco promotion is at its source. The media companies that own Hollywood studios need to know that parents want kid-rated movies to stop promoting tobacco.

   **As an individual parent**, you can make a big impact. Write a thoughtful letter to the top media executive at a major studio’s parent company. Then copy (cc:) the letter to the other two companies and to Hollywood’s lobbying group, the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA). Base your letter on the powerful facts you’ve learned about movies and kids’ health. There’s no need to get “personal”!

   **Bob Iger**
   Disney

   **Dick Parsons**
   Time Warner

   **Howard Stringer**
   Sony

   **Dan Glickman**
   Motion Picture Association of America

   **Your organization**, in addition to writing the studios’ “parent” companies and lobbying group, should write local movie theater managers, the CEOs of the chains that own them, and their trade group, the National Association of Theatre Owners (NATO).

   Hollywood will stop promoting tobacco in kid-rated movies when it feels pressure through its corporate owners and movie theaters in towns and cities across the country. That’s how parents will be heard.
Three giant media companies make more than half of all movies with smoking. Experts find adolescents are influenced by movie tobacco content to start smoking. If these companies chose, they could stop producing and distributing youth-rated films with smoking tomorrow. They could also update Hollywood’s rating system, which they control through the Motion Picture Association of America, to impose an “R” on almost all tobacco scenes in the future.

CORPORATE LEADER
Richard D. Parsons, CEO
Time Warner
1 Time Warner Center
New York, NY 10019

MOVIE LABELS
Warner Bros, Castle
Rock, New Line,
Picturehouse, HBO Films

TOBACCO CONTENT, 8-YEAR AVG.
G/PG Movies: 38%
PG-13 Movies: 65%
R-Rated Movies: 85%

NEW TEEN SMOKERS YEARLY (estimated)
90,000

CORPORATE LEADER
Robert Iger, CEO
The Disney Company
500 S. Buena Vista
Burbank, CA 91521

MOVIE LABELS
Disney Pictures,
Touchstone, Miramax

TOBACCO CONTENT, 8-YEAR AVG.
G/PG Movies: 35%
PG-13 Movies: 80%
R-Rated Movies: 92%

NEW TEEN SMOKERS YEARLY (estimated)
61,000

CORPORATE LEADER
Howard Stringer, CEO
Sony Corporation
550 Madison Avenue
New York, NY 10022

MOVIE LABELS
Columbia, Sony Pictures/Classics, MGM, Screen Gems, Tristar

TOBACCO CONTENT, 8-YEAR AVG.
G/PG Movies: 61%
PG-13 Movies: 79%
R-Rated Movies: 88%

NEW TEEN SMOKERS YEARLY (estimated)
70,000
**SUMMARY** | In 2006, two-thirds of U.S.-produced, live action movies (116 of 176) included tobacco. For the eighth year in a row, most kid-rated movies (54%) featured tobacco use. Three companies — Sony, Time Warner, and General Electric (Universal) — accounted for 59% percent of PG-13 movies with smoking.

### 2006 KID-RATED MOVIES WITH TOBACCO

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Movie Title</th>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Studio</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Curious George</td>
<td>G: GE</td>
<td>Lions Gate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Akeelah and the Bee</td>
<td>PG: Lions Gate</td>
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<td>Ant Bully, The</td>
<td>PG: Time Warner</td>
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<tr>
<td>Barnyard</td>
<td>PG: Viacom</td>
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<td>Flushed Away</td>
<td>PG: Viacom</td>
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<td>Lassie</td>
<td>PG: Weinstein</td>
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<td>Material Girls</td>
<td>PG: Sony</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pink Panther</td>
<td>The (PG: Sony)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rocky Balboa</td>
<td>PG: Sony</td>
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<tr>
<td>16 Blocks</td>
<td>PG-13: Time Warner</td>
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<tr>
<td>A Good Year</td>
<td>PG-13: News Corp.</td>
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<tr>
<td>All the King's Men</td>
<td>PG-13: Sony</td>
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<td>American Dreamz</td>
<td>PG-13: GE</td>
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<td>An American Haunting</td>
<td>PG-13: Freestyle</td>
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<td>Annapolis</td>
<td>PG-13: Disney</td>
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<td>ATL</td>
<td>PG-13: Time Warner</td>
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<td>Benchwarmers</td>
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<td>Break-Up, The</td>
<td>(PG-13: GE)</td>
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<td>Catch a Fire</td>
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<td>Click</td>
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<td>Da Vinci Code, The</td>
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<td>Date Movie</td>
<td>(PG-13: News Corp.)</td>
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<td>Déjà Vu</td>
<td>(PG-13: Disney)</td>
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<td>Dreamgirls</td>
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<td>Fast and the Furious 3</td>
<td>(PG-13: GE)</td>
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<td>Fearless</td>
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<td>Flyboys</td>
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<td>For Your Consideration</td>
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<td>Goall</td>
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<td>Grudge 2, The</td>
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<td>Holiday, The</td>
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<td>Illusionist, The</td>
<td>(PG-13: Yari)</td>
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<td>Kinky Boots</td>
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<td>Larry the Cable Guy, H.I.</td>
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<td>Last Holiday</td>
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<td>Man of the Year</td>
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<td>Marie Antoinette</td>
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<td>Mission: Impossible III</td>
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<td>My Super Ex-Girlfriend</td>
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<td>Pirates of the Caribbean 2</td>
<td>(PG-13: Disney)</td>
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<td>Poseidon</td>
<td>(PG-13: Time Warner)</td>
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<td>Prairie Home Companion</td>
<td>(PG-13: GreeneStreet)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pulse</td>
<td>(PG-13: Weinstein)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pursuit of Happyness</td>
<td>(PG-13: Sony)</td>
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<tr>
<td>School for Scoundrels</td>
<td>(PG-13: Sony/Weinstein)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### SOME 2007 KID-RATED MOVIES WITH TOBACCO

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Movie Title</th>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Studio</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meet the Robinsons</td>
<td>G: Disney</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Bean's Holiday</td>
<td>G: GE</td>
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<tr>
<td>Amazing Grace</td>
<td>PG: Goldwyn</td>
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<td>Arthur and the Invisibles</td>
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<td>Hairspray</td>
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<td>Nancy Drew</td>
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<td>Pride</td>
<td>PG: Lionsgate</td>
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<td>1408</td>
<td>PG-13: Weinstein</td>
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<td>Balls of Fury</td>
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<td>Blades of Glory</td>
<td>PG-13: Viacom</td>
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<td>Catch and Release</td>
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<td>Daddy's Little Girls</td>
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<td>Evening</td>
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<td>Hot Rod</td>
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<td>I Now Pronounce You Chuck and Larry</td>
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<td>Invisible</td>
<td>The (PG-13: Disney)</td>
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<td>Lucky You</td>
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<td>Next</td>
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<td>Norbit</td>
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<td>Rush Hour 3</td>
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<td>Simpsons Movie</td>
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<td>Who's Your Caddy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wild Hogs</td>
<td>PG-13: Disney</td>
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For latest releases, visit: www.smokefremovies.ucsf.edu/now_showing/