

WORLD NO TOBACCO DAY 2008

American Academy of Pediatrics

May 30, 2008

The theme for World No Tobacco Day 2008 is **Tobacco-Free Youth: Break the Tobacco Marketing Net**. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) joins with the World Health Organization and others to call for an end to the tobacco industry's spending billions of dollars worldwide on aggressive marketing. This advertising, promotion, and sponsorship encourages potential users, especially adolescents, to try tobacco and become long-term, addicted smokers. Nicotine is a highly addictive substance and experimentation by children and adolescents can lead to a lifetime of tobacco dependence. The health of a significant percentage of the world's youth is seriously threatened by these deadly products.

According to the WHO, one of the most effective ways countries can protect young people from experimenting and becoming regular tobacco users is to ban all forms of direct and indirect tobacco advertising, including promotion of tobacco products and sponsorship, by the tobacco industry, of any events or activities. Evidence-based tobacco-control strategies that are comprehensive, sustained, and support nonsmoking behaviors have been shown to prevent and reduce tobacco use.

"The American Academy of Pediatrics is committed to eliminating children's exposure to tobacco and secondhand smoke in the US and throughout the world," said Renee Jenkins, MD, FAAP, AAP President. The Academy's tobacco prevention and control activities are coordinated through the Richmond Center (www.aap.org/richmondcenter), and include:

AAP endorsement of the newly revised US Public Health Service Guideline *Treating Tobacco Use and Dependence: 2008 Update* released May 2008 strengthens recommendations for tobacco cessation counseling in pediatric care, recommends counseling, pharmacotherapy and quit-line referral interventions in all health care settings, including for parents in pediatric care settings, and recommends counseling (but not pharmacotherapy) for adolescents. The guideline and evidence now also supports pediatric care setting interventions to prevent exposure to secondhand smoke.

A partnership with the Smoke Free Movies campaign at the University of California, San Francisco is working to reduce the exposure of smoking in movies geared toward youth. The Smoke Free Movies campaign aims to sharply reduce the US film industry's domestic and global marketing toward youth.

- According to a new report from UCSF, *One year later: Are Motion Picture Association of America's (MPAA's) tobacco labels protecting movie audiences?* (<http://repositories.cdlib.org/ctcre/tcpmus/MPAA2008>), in the twelve months since the MPAA announced that "all smoking will [now] be considered" in movie ratings, the MPAA has not elevated the rating of a single motion picture released to theaters because of its tobacco content. Of the movies that achieved "Top Ten" box office ranking for at least a week, released in the twelve months after the MPAA's May 10, 2007 announcement, 61 percent (95/155) featured tobacco. Only 12 percent (4/34) of youth-rated, top box office films and 5 percent (5/95) of all top box office films with tobacco imagery received tobacco descriptors.

- The UCSF content analysis of the 2007-8 top box office movie sample finds a modest 29 percent decline in the number of PG-13 tobacco incidents, although other rating categories were substantially unchanged. This decline in PG-13 incidents demonstrates that film industry changes beneficial to public health are feasible. Because the MPAA failed to label most PG-13 films from major studios with smoking, its tobacco rating policy cannot be directly linked to the modest but detectable decline in PG-13 rated tobacco incidents during the last year. An industry-wide set of uniform policies, including an R-rating for future on-screen tobacco, can make this modest advance more substantial — and permanent.

The World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control calls on countries to implement scientifically proven measures to reduce tobacco use and its impact. More about World No Tobacco Day 2008 activities is at www.who.int/tobacco/wntd/2008/en/index.html. The World Health Organization calls on the following groups to act:

Call to policy-makers:

- Require by law a comprehensive ban on all forms of advertising, promotion and sponsorship of tobacco products. Implement policies and programs that do not target youth in isolation. Interventions that target the population as a whole, such as banning all forms of tobacco advertising, raising tobacco taxes, and creating 100% smoke-free environments have the greatest success in reducing youth tobacco use.

Call to young people:

- Let the policy-makers of your country know what you think. Advocate for a total ban on advertising, promotion and sponsorship of tobacco products in your country. Get involved in campaigns to educate your peers on how the tobacco industry uses advertising, promotion and sponsorship to persuade you to smoke or use other forms of tobacco.

Call to NGOs:

- Advocate to policy-makers for a complete ban on advertising, promotion and sponsorship of tobacco products in your country. Help organize youth groups so they can be part of the campaign and engage in the conception, development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of tobacco control policies and programs to ban advertising, promotion and sponsorship of tobacco products.

Call to the public:

- Call on policy-makers to ban advertising, promotion and sponsorship of tobacco products to protect young people.

The American Academy of Pediatrics is an organization of 60,000 primary care pediatricians, pediatric medical subspecialists, and pediatric surgical specialists dedicated to the health, safety, and well being of infants, children, adolescents, and young adults.