



September 20, 2017

Stanton A. Glantz, PhD
Professor of Medicine
University of California – San Francisco
530 Parnassus
Suite 366, Box 1390
San Francisco, CA 94103-1030

Dear Dr. Glantz:

The American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP), representing approximately 129,000 family physicians, supports the Smokefree Movies Initiative. Family physicians treat patients from birth to death, providing the unique perspective of the harmful effects of tobacco use over the entire lifespan. Tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable death in the United States; AAFP and its members work diligently to eliminate all tobacco use, discourage tobacco use in all public and workplace settings and even list tobacco as a cause on death certificates when appropriate. Ninety percent of smokers start smoking by the age of 18, indicating the prioritization of preventing youth tobacco use initiation. A 2012 Surgeon General's report concluded youth viewership of smoking on screen can cause youth smoking initiation, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) predicts of the 6.4 million young people exposed to smoking on screen, ultimately 2.1 million of those will die prematurely from tobacco related illness and diseases.

The AAFP supports efforts to reduce the impact of smoking in movies on youth tobacco initiation by requiring movies depicting smoking to have an "R" rating, require producers to certify on screen that no one on the production received anything of value in consideration for using or displaying tobacco, require strong anti-smoking ads before any movie with tobacco use regardless of rating and to stop identifying tobacco brands. The AAFP also supports University of California San Francisco Center for Tobacco Control and Education Smokefree Movies solutions as follows:

1. Rate new smoking movies "R"

Any future film that shows or implies tobacco should be given an adult rating — in the U.S., an R-rating. The only two categorical exceptions to this rating would be when the tobacco depiction (a) unambiguously reflects the dangers and consequences of tobacco use or (b) represents the tobacco use of an actual person, as in a biographical drama or documentary.

2. Certify no payoffs

Credited producers should complete a legally-binding affidavit declaring that nobody associated with any future media production received any consideration or entered into any agreement related to tobacco depictions, and should post a certificate to this effect in the final credits.

3. Require strong anti-smoking ads

Studios and theaters should run a proven-effective, anti-smoking advertisement (not produced by a tobacco company) immediately before any media production with any tobacco presence, in any distribution channel, regardless of the work's age classification.

4. Stop identifying tobacco brands


Tobacco brand imagery should not appear in the foreground or background of any scene in any future media production, regardless of the work's age classification.

5. End public subsidies for tobacco imagery

Future media productions with tobacco imagery should be made ineligible for generous state tax credits ("production incentives") and other public subsidies.

These proposed solutions would contribute to preventing millions youth from smoking and addiction, chronic disease and tobacco related illness, and premature death. The AAFP is committed to reducing tobacco use and is proud to support the Smokefree Movies Initiative.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Meigs, Jr.', with a stylized flourish and the initials 'MD' at the end.

John Meigs, Jr., MD, FAAFP
Board Chair