FILE NAME: Newspaper & Magazine Articles (NMA)

DATE: 1962 June 23

DOC#: NMA110

DOCUMENT DESCRIPTION: NYT - Cancer Society Calls on Colleges To Curb Cigarette Advertising

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New York Times (1857-Current file); Jun 23, 1962; ProQuest Historical Newspapers The New York Times (1851 - 20 pg. 21

Cancer Society Calls on Colleges To Curb Cigarette Advertising

CHICAGO, June 22 (UPI)—The American Cancer Society decided today to urge college presidents and the Federal Trade Commission to help curb the promotion of smoking among college students.

The society's seventy-four-member board of directors voted unanimously for a proposal aimed at "the apparently intensified promotional campaign in colleges to increase the sale of cigarettes to college students."

The proposal said that the sponsoring of televised college athletic events by tobacco companies "resulted in advertising appeal to the very age group which the society is most anxious to prevent from being subject to the persuasion to smoke."

The board authorized its staff to send letters to the presidents of about 100 major universities telling them that "in view of the evidence of the deleterious effects of smoking on health, the propriety of supporting athletic events in colleges by such means be conscientiously considered."

The staff was ordered to write the trade commission to ask whether it approved of campus promotion of cigarettes and whether it had any jurisdiction in the matter.

Although the board made no official change in its cautiously stated opinion of two years ago in the cigarette-cancer dispute, it did endorse the recent report of the Royal College of Physicians in Britain. The board called the report "the outstanding event" since the last meeting of the board and said it admired the college's "unequivocal position."

The college urged the British Government to warn its people that there is "convincing evidence" linking cigarette smoking with lung cancer.

Dr. Howard C. Taylor Jr. of New York, chairman of the society's committee on tobacco and cancer, said that his group believed that cigarette smoking was "a major cause" of lung cancer. He said that the British study was especially important because it came form "a conservative organization."

Dr. E. Cuyler Hammond, director of the society's statistical research section, said that his studies for the last ten years had convinced him that the only cause of one of the common forms of lung cancer was inhaling irritants such as cigarette smoke, uranium dust or asbestos dust.

Smokers account for most of the deaths from that type of lung cancer, he said, since more people smoke than work with uranium of asbestos.

"All studies have shown exactly the same results: nonsmokers have the lowest death rate; pipe and cigar smokers not much higher, cigarette smokers a much higher death rate, and heavy cigarette smokers the highest death rate," Dr. Hammond said. "Cigarette smoking more than doubles the death rate."

Of the increased death rate among smokers, he said, lung cancer accounts for anly 13 per cent of the increase while heart disease accounts for more than half. Other causes are cancers of the mouth and throat and various lung ailments.

Industry Is Silent

The Tobacco Institute withheld comment last night on the action of the cancer society's board of directors.

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