

12/23/07 Detailed Outline of MPAA Presentations

BR Bloom Introduction: I am grateful to be asked by Dan Glickman to come to have a discussion with leaders in the industry and to have been asked to summarize the scientific evidence and provide a recommendation on smoking in the movies. Let me begin by indicating that:

- The Harvard School of Public Health has long been a leader in studies of tobacco and health. Our chair of epidemiology published in 1981 the first account of the impact of 2nd hand smoking on increasing the risk of lung cancer
- I believe we have been the first school to establish a formal policy that it would not take money from tobacco or tobacco-related industry, and Harvard University was the first university to divest its tobacco stocks.
- I am joined for this meeting by two outstanding academics with unique expertise
 - Jon Samet is Chair of the Department of Epidemiology at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, a world expert in the impact of airborne pollutants and the impact of tobacco on health. He has been involved in the preparation of the past five Surgeon General's Reports on Smoking, and was selected as the Editor of three of them.
 - Jay Winsten is Frank Stanton Director of the Center for Health Communication at Harvard School of Public Health. He has had a long collaboration with the media and in the late 1980s brought together all the major studios and leading television networks for the Designated Driver Campaign that has saved thousands of lives.
- Let me begin by outlining the problem of tobacco from a Dean's Perspective - If one asked the Dean of a medical school what people die of in the US, he or she would probably say 33% from heart disease, 24% from cancer and 14% from injuries. If you ask a dean of public health, he or she would say 20% from smoking related illness, 15% from poor diet and lack of exercise, and 14% from

injuries. From the public health perspective, fully half of the burden of premature death and disease is preventable or postponable, and the largest preventable cause of death and disease is tobacco related. The CDC estimates that 438,000 people in US and 5 million worldwide die prematurely each year from tobacco-related disease.

- Why we are so concerned about smoking?
 - Nicotine is the most addictive substance known – every bit as addictive as heroin or crack cocaine. The well known difficulty in getting smoking cessation is a reflection of the addictive power of nicotine.

- Why do we think it so important to remove smoking from movies accessible to children and adolescents?
 - Both films and tobacco industries target youth. 29% of moviegoers are between 12-24, and the average age of first smoking in US is 13y.
 - If an individual does not start to smoke between ages 12 and 24y there is only about a 5% lifetime risk of ever smoking. Thus keeping children and young people from becoming addicted to tobacco during this age window is critical.
 - As you will hear again from Jay Winsten, your industry has tremendous influence in reinforcing constructive social norms and values, but it also has the power to reinforce some that are harmful.

- We know movies are only one of the determinants of smoking in youths, and I don't want to hang the whole problem on the motion picture industry. But we know you can make a real difference. We have only two significant tools to reduce smoking
 - Price, due to the inelasticity of demand of young people.
 - And making smoking socially unacceptable

The glamorization of smoking in films, even when the bad guys smoke, has impact. And even normalization of smoking in films has impact

- We are here to ask if the industry will take leadership in preventing

addiction of our young people to tobacco.

You should know the context: There are other major players out there – Attorneys General, NGO's, The American Medical Association, WHO, advocacy groups, parent, religious and even shareholders groups strongly advocating against smoking in films. This Anti-smoking Coalition has proposed Four Actions that we know would achieve the goal of eliminating smoking in youth rated films. As you will have seen in their ad in Wednesday's Variety, their proposals are to:

1. Rate new smoking movies "R" except if reflects clear dangers or to portray historical figure
2. Certify no payoffs or placements from the tobacco industry
3. Provide strong anti-smoking ads in any film with smoking.
4. Stop identifying tobacco brands

http://www.smokefreemovies.ucsf.edu/ourads/ad_sfm42_variety.htm

- A recent poll put out by AMA revealed that 80% of adults believe movies influence kids to smoke, and 70% support an R rating for films with smoking.
- **Our Bottom Line:** We are not experts in film ratings, but we will present some of the science that indicates something urgently needs to be done, and some experiences that indicate that with leadership it can be done.