

HOLLYWOOD, SIGN:

FOR 25 YEARS, health professionals have grown more concerned about the link between movies and adolescent smoking.

The tobacco industry's own documents show that it spent millions of dollars to get tobacco products into scores of Hollywood movies.

Independent researchers have confirmed the reason. Each year, 1.5 million American young people light up for the first time — and exposure to smoking in movies is a major contributing factor.

A public health catastrophe becomes, for Hollywood, an historic opportunity.

Tobacco promotion has been banned from radio and television for 35 years.

And, since 1998, domestic tobacco companies (but not their overseas corporate siblings) face youth-related restrictions on advertising and bans on paid brand placement.

Yet tobacco still rules the movies.

From 1999 to 2006, 37% of G/PG and 74% of PG-13 movies have featured tobacco. Youth-rated films have delivered an estimated 24.5 billion tobacco impressions in theaters alone, not counting those from DVDs, cable, download and other channels.

A point in favor of a lasting solution? All major studios, most of the distribution networks that perpetually recycle films—and their tobacco images—and the rating system now being updated by the MPAA are controlled by just six parent companies:

Number 1 | Rate new smoking

movies "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.

Number 2 | Certify no payoffs.

The producers should post a certificate in the closing credits declaring that nobody on the production received anything of value in exchange for using or displaying tobacco.

Number 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 any tobacco presence, regardless of its MPAA rating, in any distribution channel.

Number 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.

which the studios control, obviously find it difficult to make a clean break.

They may have been tempted to draw out this issue; to woo apologists; to blame everyone else in the industry, from writers to directors to independent producers; to launch PR and political charm offensives; and to devise unacceptable *placebo policies*, like a PG-13 label with tobacco descriptor, that will not substantially reduce teen exposure to tobacco imagery.

But the reality is, the studios have knowingly allowed tobacco into youth-rated films after being introduced to the scientific evidence of wide-scale harm.

If the studios and their captive MPAA cannot act responsibly, then their parent companies must do so, with no further delay.

These four voluntary policy solutions are the best deal the industry will see.

National survey results released February 12 show that 81% of U.S. adults are already convinced that movies recruit kids to smoke, 70% back the R-rating solution, and these numbers are growing.

The major studios and their parents can make an historic contribution to public health or go down in history as the last commercial medium to recruit kids to smoke.

Put this behind you, Hollywood. Simply sign on the dotted line.

- **Disney** (Touchstone and Miramax)
- **General Electric** (Universal)
- **News Corp.** (Fox)
- **Sony** (Columbia and MGM)
- **Time Warner** (Warner Bros., New Line)
- **Viacom** (Paramount and DreamWorks)

Given the long history of tobacco in Hollywood, the six major studios and the Motion Picture Association of America,

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