

Dear _____
 I wish to inform you that one of your constituents, who was a patient of mine has died. The death was due to the following disease:

- _____ lung cancer,
- _____ chronic obstructive lung disease,
- _____ coronary heart disease,
- _____ other tobacco-related cancer or vascular disease.

This person was a smoker. Tobacco smoking is the major avoidable cause of this disease.

From time to time I know you are approached by representatives of the tobacco industry requesting support for some legislation that would benefit them. I hope you will keep this death in mind as you consider whether or not to support this legislation.

Sincerely,

signed _____

address _____

Doc

Doctors Ought to Care
 1000 101
 Medical College of Georgia
 Augusta, Georgia 30612

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This is the postcard some doctors plan to send to congressmen when their constituents die of cigarette-related illnesses.

Doctors use 'obituaries' to fight tobacco lobby

By Howard Wolinsky

Frustrated by legislative inaction on tobacco issues, angry doctors soon will send unusual messages to Congress: "obituaries" of patients who died from smoking-related diseases.

Starting next month, some doctors will sign and send black-bordered postcards to congressmen to tell them when a constituent dies from lung cancer, heart disease or other cigarette-related illness, said Dr. Rick Richards, president of DOC (Doctors Ought to Care), a health-promotion group that has printed 20,000 cards.

"We're sending the message to Congress that the 1,000 Americans each day who die from tobacco-related disease are real human beings. These people are our patients and their constituents," Richards said.

A family-medicine teacher at the Medical College of Georgia, Richards said the campaign is scheduled to begin during the next congressional session when a bill to ban tobacco advertising and promotion will be reintroduced. The American Medical Association, which has become increasingly active in anti-tobacco efforts, has urged passage of the bill.

"Our congressional leaders need to be sensitized to tobacco issues," said Dr. Alan Blum of Manhasset, N.Y., founder of DOC. "One of the haunting tragedies of this century is how little Congress has done to counter the smoking epidemic."

Richards cited a recent Wall Street Journal article about how

the Tobacco Institute has ingratiated itself to some congressmen in several ways, including paying honorariums for making a few remarks to a regular Tuesday breakfast. "Those \$2,000 breakfast presentations may dull the reality of 1,000 deaths a day," he said.

Congressmen and aides involved with tobacco issues could not be reached for comment on the obituary postcards, but the Tobacco Institute was not amused.

Brennan Moran, assistant to the president of the institute, said the cards "will raise the level of hysteria. These are the sort of tactics some anti-smoking groups have been using to further a political goal. They grab for an emotional headline, but facts are missing."

Over the past decade, DOC has mounted a type of guerrilla warfare aimed at undermining the tobacco industry, often with a light touch. For example, the group sponsors the "Emphysema Slims" tennis tournament to counter the Virginia Slims tourney.

The postcard campaign is based on an anti-tobacco program mounted by the British Medical Association in 1984. A Canadian group launched a similar campaign three weeks ago and already has distributed 35,000 cards, said Dr. Andrew Pipe, chairman of Physicians for a Smoke Free Canada.

DOC is making its cards available to physicians and county medical societies for \$2 per 100 cards. Interested individuals can write to to DOC at HH-101, Medical College of Georgia, Augusta, Ga. 30912.

Dear _____,

I'm sorry that I cannot vote for you anymore because I just died. I asked my relatives to send this to you after my death.

I was a _____ smoker and died as a result of:
____ lung cancer.
____ chronic obstructive lung disease.
____ coronary heart disease.
____ other tobacco-related cancer or vascular disease.

As you are aware, the tobacco manufacturers are the major cause of this disease. As one of your constituents, I felt compelled to send this to you in hopes you would do everything possible to prevent the tobacco industry from continuing to profit from the addiction, suffering and deaths of people like me.

From time to time, I know you are approached by representatives of the tobacco industry requesting support for some legislation that would benefit them. I hope you will keep my death in mind as you consider whether or not to support this legislation.

Sincerely,

signed _____

address _____