

# AMA taking a grave step to fight tobacco

By Howard Wolinsky

The usually staid AMA is taking an unconventional tack to fight tobacco by urging physicians to send black-bordered "obituary" cards to congressmen when their patients die from smoking-related disease.

Dr. James Sammons, executive vice president of the Chicago-based American Medical Association, said Tuesday the goal of the campaign is to recruit more sponsors for an AMA-inspired bill now before the U.S. Congress that would ban all tobacco advertising.

Sammons has asked other major medical associations to have their members send the postcards to Congress when their patients die from smoking-caused disease, such as

## Sends 'obit' cards to stir lawmakers

lung cancer, heart attacks and other killers. The obituary cards do not disclose the patient's name.

The AMA has printed about 3,000 cards.

The efforts of the nation's largest medical group follow those of a similar campaign launched in January by Doctors Ought to Care, a 2,000-member health promotion group.

Dr. Rick Richards, president of that group and a family-medicine professor at the Medical College of Geor-

gia, said, "The AMA should be congratulated. Doctors have to realize that there's more to fighting tobacco-related disease than providing treatment to patients." Richards' group has distributed 48,000 cards.

Brennan Moran, assistant to the president of the Tobacco Institute, said the cards divert attention "in a highly emotional way" from the debate on whether a ban of tobacco advertising violates the First Amendment of the Constitution.

But Rep. Ron Wyden (D-Ore.), one of 31 co-sponsors of the tobacco advertising bill, said the cards complement other lobbying efforts "by increasing the consciousness of congressmen about the No. 1 killer in this country."



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## Morning heart attacks tied to blood clotting

From Sun-Times Wires

BOSTON—Heart attacks are most likely in the morning—possibly as an evolutionary leftover from when animals had to fight to survive, a researcher suggests.

The stated reason: Blood clots, a common precursor of heart attacks, are most likely in the morning. And animals that began their day battling for food needed clotting as protection against cuts.

Two years ago, Dr. James E.

Muller and associates at Harvard Medical School discovered that heart attacks and deaths from those attacks were especially common between 9 a.m. and noon.

The researchers found that the tendency of blood to form clots—technically known as platelet aggregability—is highest in the three hours after 6 a.m. The platelets were most likely to clump together at 9 a.m., an hour after the subjects arose.

No significant increase was at any other time.

A heart attack usually occurs when a blood clot blocks a coronary artery narrowed by fat deposits. The heart muscle is starved of oxygen, and some of it dies.

While the findings—reported today's New England Journal of Medicine—do not prove conclusively that increased platelet aggregation causes heart attacks, they suggest it may be an important factor.

Dear Representative:

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.
- other tobacco-related cancer (includes mouth, larynx, esophagus cancer).
- chronic obstructive lung disease (includes emphysema).
- coronary heart disease.
- other tobacco-related vascular disease.

This person was a smoker or a smokeless tobacco user. Tobacco use is the major avoidable cause of this disease.

I urge you to co-sponsor and actively support legislation (such as H.R. 1272) that would prohibit the advertising and promotion of this uniquely harmful product. Please keep this person's tobacco-related death in mind as you consider this issue.

Sincerely,

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

## Vietnam 'wall' replica due here

A half-scale replica of the famed Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., will be displayed in Chicago July 16-23.

The "Moving Wall" inscribed with the names of 58,132 killed or missing Vietnam, will be erected in Olive Park at the lakefront. Nearly 250 feet long, it is made of plexiglass and wood.

A similar replica displayed in Grant Park last year drew hundreds of thousands of viewers, said Chicagoan Jerome P. Condon, Army veteran, Vietnam and a spokesman for the sponsor Chicago Moving Wall Committee.

Admission to see the wall will be free.