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“Bill of Rights Tour” twists patriotism for corporate ends

On March 8, when the Philip Morris Companies “Bill of Rights Tour” rolls into town, chances are anti-smoking activists will exercise their first amendment rights and call the high tech tour - a \$60 million event to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the historic document - the way they see it.

“Philip Morris has wrapped itself in the American flag for this campaign in order to project a positive image and neutralize opposition from local health organizations, specifically those who fight against cancer, heart and lung disease,” says Medical Society member Dr. Joel Dunnington.

“The lung cancer rate in Texas has gone up 38 percent between 1988 and 1990.”

- Dr. Joel Dunnington
TMA Task Force on Tobacco Use Prevention

On Wednesday morning, March 6, Dr. Dunnington and others will hold a press conference at M. D. Anderson Cancer Center to protest the Philip Morris tour.

Dr. Dunnington, chair of the TMA Task Force on Tobacco Use Prevention, states that during the 17-month Bill of Rights Tour, approximately 580,000 cigarette-related deaths in the United States will occur, based on figures published in the Feb. 1, CDC *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*. Citing annual state health department reports on the annual costs of smoking in Texas, Dr. Dunnington said that total lung cancer cases have risen 38 percent, from

“The tobacco companies say they are like any other legitimate business, but they are not. What other business has to defend itself by arguing that its products are legal?”

- Larry White
Merchants of Death, 1988

4,496 in 1988 to 6,222 in 1990.

A 1989 survey of 4,400 public school students for the Texas Department of Health shows that more than half of seventh grade students indicated they had smoked at least one cigarette in their lifetime.

By twelfth grade, 68 percent had tried smoking a cigarette. In addition, more than half of students in Texas who try smoking cigarettes do so before they are 13.

The majority of exhibit-goers in the 20 states visited so far have been children.

The cost of smoking in Texas is approximately \$3 billion annually, according to a 1989 cost analysis by the state health department. This includes the direct costs of prevention, diagnosis and treatment of smoking-related diseases, and indirect costs of lost income and productivity due to death and disability from smoking-related diseases, says Ron Todd, director of the department's Office of Smoking and Health.

Philip Morris was approached by the National Archives in 1989 and encouraged to be a corporate sponsor for the bicentennial cele-

(See Rights, page 6)

Workers' comp changes cause concerns, delays

While changes in the laws dealing with the Texas Workers' Compensation Program went into effect Jan. 1, 1991, delays in rule making and other administrative changes will postpone enforcement of the law until June 1. This message was delivered at a briefing on workers' comp held Thursday, Feb. 7, in Houston.

Changes in the law, enacted in a special legislative session last year, created the need for an extensive revision of the rules, said John Facey, chief of the state compensation commission's policy and planning division. Many of these regulations are only now being written.

Nevertheless, there are significant changes in program requirements for injured patients whose accidents have occurred after the first of the year. Among the major requirements:

- Patients retain the right to choose a treating physician, but once chosen, only the “treating physician” of record may refer for additional care. This physician must order and approve all subsequent care related to the worker's injury.

(See Workers' Comp, page 6)

Dues Reminder

Remember that 1991 HCMS dues are due before the end of February. Members who have not paid by Friday, March 1, become delinquent. Membership is terminated for nonpayment on April 1.

TMA sponsors additional series, "Rx for the 90s"

Due to the critical nature of the information presented in the recently held "Rx for the 90s" seminar series, TMA is scheduling additional seminars.

Highlights include:

1) How to interpret the Medicare Part B 1991 Combined Disclosure Report;

2) Complete methodology for projecting the exact financial impact of limiting charges; and

3) The new Medicare legislation and how it applies to your practice.

The Houston workshop is scheduled for Thursday, March 7, at the Marriott Greenspoint, 255 North Belt.

Registration begins at 6 p.m. and the seminar runs from 6:30 - 9 p.m.

The fees for TMA members or office staff are \$70 per person, \$55 for each additional person from the same practice. Nonmember or office staff fees are \$90 per person, \$75 for each additional person from the same practice.

For additional information, call (512) 477-6704, ext. 350 or 149.

Rights (contd. from page 1)

bration of the historic document. The company managed to obtain one of the original 13 copies of the Bill of Rights from its home state - Virginia - and set about developing a 50-state promotional tour.

The tour is couched as a rare occasion to see a document that is integral to the American way of life, however, anti-smoking forces across the country and in Harris County see the tour as a cynical attempt to link constitutional rights with the rights of smokers.

A "Bill of Wrongs" being distributed along the tour by local anti-smoking groups lays out some facts behind the Philip Morris

AIDS Satellite Television Schedule

The HCMS, in cooperation with the Physician Association for AIDS Care (PAAC), has scheduled a series of continuing education teleconferences through January 1992. The program will be broadcast from noon to 2 p.m., in the Sammons Auditorium, Jesse H. Jones Library Building, 1133 M. D. Anderson Blvd., Texas Medical Center.

For information, call Becky Wood, 790-1838.

March 6	HIV-Associated Tuberculosis Pain Management in the HIV Patient
March 22	Oral Candidiasis Case Management Workshop II Hospice Care of Persons with HIV
April 3	Cytomegalovirus (CMV) Infection HIV Infection in the Prison Population HIV in the Adolescent Population
April 24	HIV-Associated Periodontitis and Gingivitis AIDS-Related Lymphomas Pediatric AIDS

smoke screen touting freedom of expression, including a report in the May 6, 1982 *San Francisco Chronicle*, that Philip Morris attempted to suppress a 1976 documentary, "Death in the West" about six cowboys, addicted smokers, with fatal lung disease.

Dr. Dunnington encourages parents to take their children to see the exhibit at the George R. Brown Convention Center.

"This may be the only chance some of them will have to see an original copy of the Bill of Rights. But, when you do, educate them about who Philip Morris is and what it does."

Workers' Comp

(contd. from page 1)

The program will allow the individual to make one change in this primary treating physician. Any further changes must be approved by the program. Treatment by a physician in an emergency does not constitute choice of a "treating physician."

• The program requires carriers to reimburse providers within 45 days of receipt of a claim. Any payments not made by 60 days

will be subject to interest charges. If the carrier chooses to dispute a claim, 50 percent of the claim must be paid to the provider within the 45-day limit. Resolution of the claim must be made by the 60th day.

• Disclosure by providers is required if the physician or other provider maintains an ownership interest of greater than five percent in the facility to which the patient is referred. The requirement goes into effect April 1.

In addition, the new regulations create some specific claim filing requirements and approved forms. In order to better understand the program it would be helpful to order copies of the 1991 Fee Guideline (\$15) and a package of sample forms along with the filing schedule required by the workers' comp program (\$18.25). To order, write: Texas Workers' Compensation Commission, ATTN: Reprographics Division, 4000 South IH35, Southfield Building, Austin, TX 78704 (512/440-3650).

Also note that the fee guidelines continue to be a source of concern for the Texas Medical Association, and it is pursuing discussions with the Commission to resolve a number of issues.