

F A C S I M I L E

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Date: 20 March 1995

From: Dr.J.R.Menchaca
Programme Manager
Tobacco or Health

To: Dr.Eric Solberg,
Execturive Director
DOC

Fax No.:

Our ref.:

Subject:

TEXT

Dear Dr.Solberg:

Next year, 1996, the WHO World No-Tobacco Day will be dedicated to "Sport and the Arts without tobacco", and we would like to collect information on this issue.

We would appreciate if you could forward to us a copy of "Worl-wide policies on tobacco-sponsored sport (Sociology of sport): Global perspective", and any other relevant information in relation with the theme above mentioned.

I look forward to hearing from you, and remain with thanks.

Yours sincerely,

Signed:



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July 1, 1996

Neil Collishaw
Tobacco or Health
Programme on Substance Abuse
World Health Organization
CH-1211
Geneva 27, Switzerland

Dear Neil,

Thank you for sending me a copy of the information kit for the WHO World No-Tobacco Day on Sport and the Arts Without Tobacco. I very much appreciate being kept informed. As you know, I have tried to serve as a sort of central archive on tobacco issues for many years, and I would welcome other materials that you might wish to send (especially things you come across from years past that might otherwise be tossed out) that would help document the WHO's work on tobacco.

I must add that I have mixed emotions about this year's theme since none of the material submitted by Eric Solberg, DOC's executive director, was selected for inclusion in the WHO packet. (As you can gather from the enclosed letters from Claire Chollat-Traquet, at one time we were closely involved in such efforts.) I am all the more disappointed because I have virtually specialized in the tobacco industry's connections to sport and the arts and have by far the largest collection of materials on the subject in the world. In March of 1995, Dr. Menchaca solicited our involvement, and Eric responded. In addition, early this year I wrote to Dr. Menchaca offering our assistance.

As you know, DOC does not just study the subject--we act. And as much as we all hold up the Victoria example as the finest regional effort to date in limiting tobacco influence in sports, I believe that DOC has done far more than any other group in calling attention to the tobacco-sports-TV-connection. Eric Solberg's presentation on sports and tobacco at last year's WHO meeting was an example of our work, following on the heels of my keynote addresses on sports and tobacco at the first national conference on smoking in the US in 1989 and at the Surgeon General's Interagency Council meeting on sports and tobacco, which I helped organize in 1988. At the world meetings in Australia

and Argentina, I also gave several talks on sports sponsorship.

To the best of my knowledge, outside of Victoria DOC has sponsored more sports activities aimed at undermining tobacco use and promotion than any other organization--an amazing accomplishment for a group with such a miniscule budget. Indeed, as Eric points out, the Victoria Health Promotion Foundation relies solely on government funding as a result of policy enacted in 1987, whereas DOC's numerous examples of sports-related activities (eg, the Emphysema Slims Tennis Tournament [dating to 1978], the Dead Man Chew softball league, sponsorship of the world champion US Boomerang Team, and dozens of local sports events) have never relied on government funding or the enactment of legislation.

As for the arts, I have compiled the largest (and perhaps the only) bibliography on the subject, consisting of more than 400 items, as part of an ongoing self-funded monitoring of the subject. DOC has also been urging arts institutions to forego tobacco funding since 1983 when I led a "housecall" at New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art during the exhibition of the Vatican art treasures--sponsored by Philip Morris. Since then, DOC has publicized its "Artists as Ashtrays" theme (complete with a limited edition poster) to art museums throughout the US. In April I was invited to speak on the ethics of tobacco underwriting of the arts at the annual meeting of the Texas Association of Museums, which is the second largest museum association in the US.

In short, citing the Victoria example is important, but DOC's activities represent the kind of low-cost, easily replicated, grassroots efforts that should also be recognized. From our end, Eric and I would still be willing to assist WHO in enhancing the knowledge and skills of committed individuals and groups around the world on sponsorship issues. Would you be interested in collaborating on a half-day training session in China in '97, if not sooner?

Here's hoping we can stay in closer touch on these and other issues. I look forward to hearing from you. Warm regards to one and all.

Sincerely,

Alan Blum, MD
Associate Professor

Founder, DOC (Doctors Ought to Care)