

While focusing on the tobacco industry has become second-nature (now that it is politically correct) to dealing with the public health problem of tobacco use, more than a decade ago DOC began to draw attention to allies of the tobacco industry. A major focus has been to expose the long-standing connections between healthcare related corporations and tobacco companies. A report released by DOC in 1993 (*Sick Bedfellows*) identified the top ten health hypocrites by exposing the links between major pharmaceutical companies and the tobacco industry.

Among the health-related companies identified as having close ties to the tobacco industry was Kimberly-Clark, the manufacturer of surgical masks, gowns, hospital supplies, and at the time the top cigarette paper manufacturer in North America. In the late 1980s, DOC helped to spear-head an effort with the Tobacco Program of the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility (led by Father Michael Crosby) to exert pressure on Kimberly-Clark to end its corporate ties with the tobacco industry.

In April, 1990 at the annual shareholder's meeting of Kimberly-Clark, DOC founder Alan Blum, MD represented the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America which introduced a stockholder's resolution aiming to dissolve any business related to tobacco or tobacco products. Management of Kimberly-Clark responded to the resolution defending its position as a supplier of cigarette paper to the tobacco industry:

"...As corporate citizens of the larger community, we should be and are mindful of the society's interests, but our specific objective is not the social common good. That is government's special responsibility. Rather, Kimberly-Clark's special objective is the particular good of those who depend on the Corporation's success, i.e. stockholders, employees, and, indirectly, the communities where we are located...

"The Corporation does not promote smoking, but it is neither competent nor obliged, nor should it be, to force individuals to stop if they have chosen to do so...

"There is, perhaps, an even more compelling reason to reject this Proposal. To discontinue our tobacco-related business would result in the loss of employment for approximately 2,700 people throughout the world, the loss to the communities where the businesses are located of substantial economic benefits and the loss of profits to the stockholders. This appreciable harm would not be offset by any comparable benefit to any segment of society because alternative sources of supply of the products which Kimberly-Clark manufactures would remain readily available throughout the world...

"Management believes that to curtail this aspect of our business would do considerable harm. It would do no good. It would establish the precedent for making a decision on an irresponsible basis. The business judgment of directors and management cannot and should not be exercised in such a fashion..."

The resolution introduced by the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America received 3.5 percent of shareholder votes, making it eligible to be brought up again at any time.

The remarks made by Kimberly-Clark management at the 1990 annual meeting were recanted in May this year, when the corporation announced it would spin off its \$404 million tobacco-related businesses.

The spin-off came after an intensified, collaborative effort of health and religious organizations and individuals. After meetings at the Ninth World Conference on Smoking and Health in Paris, France in October, 1994, DOC continued its efforts by joining a committee called Kleen-Out Tobacco From Kimberly-Clark. The committee, part of the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility Tobacco program, was led by Father Michael Crosby and included DOC, the Sisters of

Charity of the Incarnate World, the United Methodist Church Global Ministries, Catholic Healthcare West, Dr. Gregory Connolly (head of the Massachusetts Tobacco Control Program) and Dr. John Slade (St. Peter's Medical Center).

The Kleen-Out Tobacco From Kimberly-Clark committee met in November, 1994 to establish goals and objectives:

1. To free Kimberly-Clark, in its domestic and foreign operations, from any involvement in the tobacco chain.
2. To challenge Kimberly-Clark, in all its operations, to proactively promote a holistic approach to health.

Several strategies came out of the committee, including raising public consciousness about the issue and encouraging health care institutions to purchase products other than Kimberly-Clark products. The continued support of shareholder resolutions, most notably that filed by The Redemptorists of the St. Louis Province and Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word which called for a "spin-off" of the tobacco-related business from the corporation, received the greatest attention.

At the 1995 annual meeting of Kimberly-Clark, the proposal for a "spin-off" helped to intensify shareholders' concern over the legal liabilities in the cigarette business.

"It's a real victory for the shareholders' voice," said Father Michael Crosby in an interview with the *New York Times*. "We told Kimberly-Clark that we would not go away," Father Crosby said, "since a company that purports to be involved in health care should not be involved in tobacco, which so undermines health."

The spin-off of Kimberly-Clark's tobacco division still raises some questions. The first is how is Kimberly-Clark going to be involved in the separate company, and did they give shares of the new company to Kimberly-Clark shareholders? Equally important is what will the

Kleen-Out Tobacco From Kimberly-Clark do about their second goal to engage Kimberly-Clark to proactively promote health?

"The fact that Kimberly-Clark spun off its cigarette paper division is not enough," commented DOC founder Dr. Alan Blum. "We hope to engage members of DOC to challenge Kimberly-Clark to become actively involved in the tobacco issue in order to help undo the damage to public health that the corporation contributed to for so many years."