Califano Declares War on Smoking

INTERAGENCY COOPERATION PLEDGED, NEW RULES AT HEW

By Cristine Russell
Washington Star Staff Writer

Calling smoking a form of "slow-motion suicide," Health, Education and Welfare Secretary Joseph A. Califano, Jr., today announced a "vigorously new program" of public education, regulation and research designed to discourage consumption of cigarettes.

The controversial campaign will be "backed by higher budgets, more energetic efforts and a renewed commitment from the government department that is charged with protecting the nation's health," pledged Califano, who proclaimed smoking "Public Health Enemy Number One in the United States."

His $23 million plan for combating cigarette smoking - the result of more than six months effort - includes new efforts within HEW itself as well as strategies for coordinating with other Federal agencies, state governments, local school systems and voluntary health groups.

IT WAS OUTLINED in a speech prepared for delivery at a meeting of health organizations who belong to the National Interagency Council on Smoking and Health.

The announcement came on the 14th anniversary of the famous surgeon general's report on smoking which established the "causal link between cigarette smoking and lung cancer" and "suggested the strong connection between smoking and heart disease" as well as other serious health problems, Califano recalled.

Since then, he said, research has found that "smoking is even more dangerous than we originally believed." Yet, "in spite of all the evidence," Califano warned that smoking is still a problem.

TOBACCO INSTITUTE CHALLENGES ACTION BEFORE SPEECH

By Cristine Russell
Washington Star Staff Writer

Even before the Department of Health, Education and Welfare's controversial new campaign against cigarette smoking was revealed, the opponents were already firing up their crusade against it and the man behind the effort, HEW Secretary Joseph A. Califano Jr.

In an unusual maneuver, the Tobacco Institute took the offensive and held a formal press conference in their headquarters here yesterday in anticipation of the report. Califano was scheduled to deliver a major policy speech to a meeting of anti-smoking organizations concerned about the rise in teen-age smoking.

The senior vice president of the trade organization, William Koepper Jr., admitted that the action was "unusual," particularly since the tobacco group was apparently not privy to advance details about the new anti-smoking plan.

But it was clear that they were concerned about the prospect of any new government initiative whatsoever which would attempt to curb smoking, particularly since the tobacco manufacturers represented by the Institute still do not acknowledge any of the health hazards attributed to cigarettes since the surgeon general's report was issued 14 years ago.

Harace R. Kornegay, president and executive director of the group (and a former congressman from the tobacco-growing state of North Carolina), said that the industry would be looking for the government campaign to be "above all, fair. . . . Fair means telling it like it is. It does not mean talking any more about 300,000 deaths."
SMOKING

Continued From A-1

encouragement we have given them not to smoke, the people of the United States are still among the world's heaviest smokers — more than 50 million adults and increasing numbers of teen-agers smoke more than 600 billion cigarettes annually.

"We must do more. If we are serious about preventive health in America," Califano said in his prepared text, which announced his intention to take the following actions:

- Increase public information and education against smoking, including a push for more broadcast messages on smoking and health.
- Concentrate on encouraging young people of school age not to start smoking. Califano pledged full cooperation with the state's Office of Education and said that he would personally urge the chief state school officer as well as the 10,000 school superintendents to develop comprehensive health education programs dealing with smoking.
- Target messages to high-risk groups such as pregnant women, industrial workers in certain settings, and persons with health problems likely to be worsened by smoking.

SPECIFICALLY, Califano said that the Food and Drug Administration, as part of its revised labeling for birth control pills, will warn that "women who use birth control pills should not smoke" because of new evidence linking smoking while using oral contraceptives with increased risk of heart attack.

- Initiate immediately the "strongest-smoking policy in government" by strengthening HEW's own smoking rules. This would ban smoking in conference rooms, classrooms, auditoriums, and other public areas and separate smokers and non-smokers within work areas to the degree that it is practicable, possible, with a general motto of "no smoking except in smoking areas."

In addition, the administrator of the General Services Administration has agreed to work with HEW to strengthen GSA anti-smoking guidelines for the 10,000 government buildings.

- Urge states which do not have laws governing smoking in public places: 20 already do to enact "strong new clean indoor air laws."
- Re-examine tax policies relating to cigarette use, since the federal excise tax has remained unchanged since 1951. The Treasury Department, Califano said, has agreed to join with HEW in an interdepartmental task force to look at possible changes, including an overall tax increase or a graduated tax based on tar and nicotine content.
- Consider cooperative action with the Federal Trade Commission, including strengthened warnings on cigarette packages and radio advertising.

THE TWO AGENCIES would also consider a controversial recommendation to give the federal government power to set maximum levels of hazardous substances such as tar and nicotine — a proposal likely to arouse "freedom of choice" opposition.
- Encourage insurance providers to offer special premiums to non-smokers.
- Expand research to further investigate areas such as behavioral reasons for smoking and better methods for stopping.

Califano's proposals steered away from any mention of the federal expenditures by the Agriculture Department to support tobacco growing, but he had earlier declared that he would "not lift a finger," which is a politically sensitive issue among the tobacco-growing states.

President Carter has also indicated that he favors continued support of the tobacco subsidy program.

Califano obviously made no move to directly prohibit cigarette consumption in any way or have the Food and Drug Administration regulate tobacco use, a move which has been advocated by some anti-smoking groups but which is considered to have little chance of congressional approval.

To provide leadership for the enlarged program within HEW, Califano said he will establish a new Office on Smoking and Health under the assistant secretary for health. The National Clearinghouse for Smoking and Health, currently the chief government office on smoking and health, would become the nucleus for the new effort.

IN 1973, its budget was cut in half and it was moved to Atlanta, but Califano said that not only will the clearinghouse return to Washington, but its $1 million budget for information and education will be increased to more than $8 million next year as part of the new Office on Smoking and Health.

Overall the HEW campaign, including research expenditures, will increase by "several million dollars" during the current year with "reprogrammed funds," and it will jump to $23 million in fiscal 1979, he said. Current estimates of what the department is spending vary — ranging from $10 million to $15 million.

In addition, with the anniversary of the 1964 surgeon general's report in mind, the HEW secretary announced that he has asked Surgeon General Julius Richmond to prepare a new report by next year which will become the "major compendium of research on smoking and health over the past generation."

Califano, himself a former pack-a-day smoker, countered criticism from the tobacco industry, saying his actions were not based upon the "silk of an ex-smoker who wants to convert the world," but upon knowledge of a "secretary who had been studying the scientific evidence on smoking and health for the past 15 years."

He condemned smoking as a major factor in 270,000 deaths from heart disease and 100,000 cancer-related deaths this year, as well as $8 billion to $7 billion in annual health care costs, and an estimated $2 billion to $13 billion economic loss in productivity, wages and absenteeism.

Launching his own counterattack, he added that the "few ... who attempt to refute this overwhelming consensus of the experts are a self-interested minority."

...
TOBACCO

Continued From A-1

or 325,000 excess deaths every year due to smoking."

AND, IN AN INDIRECT jab at the
HEW secretary, Kornegay said "it
isn't fair to seek the advice of 40 out-
side organizations on the question of
how to deal with smoking and health
and to refuse any hearing to people
like ourselves."

Kornegay's colleague William F.
Dwyer, a vice president of the
Tobacco Institute, was more
straightforward in his attack, saying
that "Secretary Califano's soon-to-
be-revealed 'stop smoking' campaign
appears the personal product of a
prohibitionist mentality. He is enti-
tled to his views on the alleged haz-
ards of tobacco. He is entitled to
voice those views and use whatever
may be his powers of personal and
private persuasion in attempts to
enlist smokers to join him among the
ranks of the reformed." (Dwyer
gave up a three-pack-a-day habit two
years ago at the request of his son.)

But, said Dwyer, "the title of
secretary of Health, Education and
Welfare does not confer an entitle-
ment to use public powers in pursuit
of a private hobby. No elective nor
appointive office in the land endowed
by the people's law grants the au-
thority to decide individual lifestyes,
to invade the minds of citizens or use
the coercive reach of federal funding
on matters as personal and private
as whether one chooses to be a
smoker or non-smoker."

ALTHOUGH THE speakers at the
press conference frequently referred
to new interest at HEW in taking ac-
tion about the smoking problem as
Califano's doing, Kornegay later
admitted that he didn't expect to
"hear anything different than what
we've been hearing for 14 years."

The Tobacco Institute's opposition
to the plan before it was announced
was countered by the support of the
American Cancer Society, which is-
issued an advance press release ap-
plauding the HEW effort in general
terms, since it, too, was uncertain as
to what the final plan would be.

"The American Cancer Society
welcomes the projected broadening
of the government's programs seek-
ing to cut down the rising incidence
of diseases caused by or associated
with cigarette smoking. This decision
of the Department of Health, Educa-
tion and Welfare is especially timely
because smoking among teen-age
boys and girls has increased while
the overall per capita consumption of
cigarettes has gone down, mainly be-
cause of the steady decline of the per-
centage of smokers among adults."

THE CANCER society has
launched its own new anti-smoking
effort, which it calls "Target Five,"
with the goal of reducing the number
of teen-age smokers by 50 percent
and the number of adult smokers by
25 percent by 1982.

Another anti-smoking group was
less willing to announce its position
in advance and instead announced its
own press conference to be held after
Califano's speech.

Lawyer John Banzhaf, who heads
the Action on Smoking and Health
group, said in his release that "there
has been a great deal of speculation,
both in the press and among anti-
smoking organizations, as to whether
these new initiatives would be truly
effective or just another government
smoke screen."

And in an interview last night he
said that he would await the an-
ouncement before making further
comment. "I don't know what my
reaction will be," said Banzhaf.

Kentucky House
Invites Califano
To Quit HEW Post

LEXINGTON, Ky. (AP) — An
anti-smoking campaign being pro-
posed by Health, Education and Wel-
fare Secretary Joseph Califano is
drawing criticism in Kentucky, the
nation's leading producer of burley
tobacco.

The Kentucky House passed a
resolution yesterday in Frankfort
calling for Califano's resignation.
The resolution, passed 65 to 14, was
to President Carter, members of
the Kentucky congressional delega-
tion and Kentucky Gov. Julian Car-
roll.

In Lexington, site of the world's
largest burley sales market, Sen.
Wendell Ford, D-Ky., told a news
conference yesterday that Califano
should direct the anti-smoking funds
instead "into well-founded scientific
research. The American people can
make their own decisions."