

## ICCCR Participants Honor Cullen, Savagely Attack Tobacco Industry

The recent ICCCR International Conference on Cancer Prevention was dedicated to the memory of Joseph Cullen, a world leader in cancer prevention whose most important and far reaching contribution was his role in leading the federal government's campaign against tobacco use.

Cullen was director of the AMC Cancer Research Center in Denver at the time of his death from a malignant brain tumor last November. Before that he was deputy director of NCI's Div. of Cancer Prevention & Control, head of NCI's Smoking, Tobacco, & Cancer Program, and coordinator of all Dept. of Health & Human Services antitobacco efforts.

The conference, held at NIH's National Library of Medicine, featured a savage attack on the "tobacco cartel" for "exporting death" to third world countries and for targeting advertising and promotional efforts to youth, minorities, and the poor. Speakers described some of the steps being taken to combat the industry.

One of the more effective efforts appears to be the 25 cent per pack increase imposed by California starting January 1989. The revenue generated by the tax is earmarked for antitobacco education and health research.

David Burns, Univ. of California (San Diego) Medical Center, said that per capita consumption of cigarettes declined in California during the period 1980-1990 from 13 to less than nine. There was a five percent drop from 1987-1990, most of it after the tax went into effect. "California has a lower per capita rate of consumption than the rest of the U.S., and the decline is accelerating," Burns said.

Judith Mackay, who in the words of panel moderator Michael Pertschuk "conquered the tobacco industry in Hong Kong and has terrorized the tobacco industry and tobacco flacks," described the threat of U.S. tobacco exports to third world countries.

"One half billion people alive today will be killed by tobacco," said Mackay, who is director of the Asian Consultancy on Tobacco Control in Hong Kong. "Fifty million Chinese children alive today will die of tobacco related disease." Global tobacco related mortality will rise from the current 2.5 million a year to over 10 million annually by the year 2050.

"The bulk of this increase will lie in developing countries, where legislative and other measures, which

in industrialized countries succeed in limiting the use of tobacco, do not exist or are at best inadequate," Mackay said.

"Of particular concern is the penetration of developing countries by the transnational tobacco companies, with aggressive promotional campaigns which include specific targeting of women, few of whom currently smoke in those countries," Mackay continued.

"The transnational tobacco companies advertise and market in ways long banned in the United States, for example selling cigarettes without health warnings, advertising on TV, and selling cigarettes with higher tar content than the same cigarettes sold in the U.S. Also, tobacco advertising revenue is a powerful influence in silencing the media from reporting on the hazards of tobacco, a particularly serious problem in developing countries where awareness of the harmfulness of tobacco is low.

"Transnational tobacco companies attempt to interfere with developing countries' own national public health laws, using political and commercial pressures to open markets and to promote foreign cigarettes. This has led not only to an increase in market share by foreign cigarettes, but evidence also points to market expansion, especially among young people.

"The entry of the transnationals leads either to a collapse of national tobacco monopolies or to their changing from a simple, unsophisticated government department which may still cooperate with health initiatives on tobacco, to an agency which copies the aggressive marketing and promotional behavior of the transnationals."

Mackay said that when efforts were made to ban smokeless tobacco in Hong Kong, they were defeated after interference by the U.S. State and Commerce departments and several U.S. senators, including Robert Dole (R-KS). Similar interference was effective in blocking antitobacco import efforts in Japan, led by Sen. Jesse Helms (R-NC).

"The president of Philip Morris gave credit to intervention of U.S. trade negotiators," Mackay said. "The president of RJR said, 'We expect such support from Congress. That's why we vote them in.'"

Mackay suggested that the United States could help limit growth in tobacco use in other countries by requiring the industry to adhere to the same standards required in the U.S.; by refraining from exerting pressures on foreign governments by both the industry and U.S. government related to opening markets to U.S. tobacco exports; and by sharing U.S. expertise in antitobacco efforts.

"The United States should be an exporter of health, not disease," she said.

Gregory Connolly, who, Pertschuk said, led the successful worldwide effort "to choke off expansion of smokeless tobacco sales," presented more details of the "transnational" tobacco companies.

Five transnational tobacco companies produce 40 percent of the 5.4 trillion cigarettes consumed each year and have assets in excess of \$100 billion, said Connolly, who is director of the Office of Nonsmoking in the Massachusetts Dept. of Health. Philip Morris and British American Tobacco control approximately 20 percent of the world's market. Monopolies in nations with centrally planned economies produce 33 percent, and monopolies in capitalistic nations 17 percent.

"As smoking rates decline in the developed world and barriers to world trade become freer, the transnational tobacco companies expand operations to developing markets," Connolly said. "Once established, the transnationals introduce competition, transform how cigarettes are made, priced, and advertised, and come to dominate the market in time. Westernization of the market results in an increase in per capita cigarette consumption and in smoking among females in the developed world.

"Most developing countries protect their tobacco market for economic reasons and resist entry of the transnationals through bans or quotas, high tariffs, or bans on advertising. The transnationals counter these measures by sale of contraband cigarettes, direct or indirect advertising, support of local tobacco companies, joint manufacturing arrangements, and use of trade leverage by developed countries to open the market."

U.S. Dept. of Agriculture credits support tobacco exports, Connolly said. "Iraq was a major recipient of this program. Saddam smokes Marlboros. Some of the money he made from U.S. tobacco sales helped pay for his missiles."

Alan Blum, assistant professor of family medicine at Baylor College of Medicine, blasted the tobacco industry for its advertising and promotional policies and the media companies which accept it.

He also criticized NCI, which he said has "failed abysmally to look at the tobacco industry," and he charged media corporations and cigarette advertisers with carrying out a "conspiracy" to oppose efforts to ban that advertising.

"Who is worse," Blum asked, "the tobacco industry or media corporations?" Antismoking ads do not exist, he added.

Blum heads an organization called DOC (Doctors Ought to Care), which was founded in 1977 to

educate the public, especially young people, about the major preventable causes of poor health. DOC employs paid media advertising laced with humor and ridicule of tobacco products and the tobacco industry, he said.

"Cigarette sales have not been seriously damaged by warnings of the dangers of smoking, because danger has become part of the formula for selling cigarettes, especially to the adolescent. But while the health consequences may not be a deterrent, ridicule by consumers of the product and the pusher holds great potential for hurting cigarette profits," Blum said.

Daily newspapers in Houston refused to accept DOC advertising, Blum charged, although weekly newspapers in the area did.

"U.S. tobacco companies are corporate criminals," Blum charged. Pointing out that most of those companies have diversified into food product and other fields, he said, "Every time you buy Post cereal, you're helping to sell cigarettes to kids. . .

#### Cancer's 'Seven Warning Signs'

"The tobacco industry is vibrant and dynamic, and we have to track it as we would a parasitic disease. The biggest obstacle to tackling the tobacco pandemic is complacency--on the part of the public and health professionals alike--stemming from the belief that the war on smoking has been won. We need to move beyond patient education and health promotion. An activist model provides an additional dimension to reinforce health outside the comfortable confines of the hospital or clinic and into the mass media, the streets, and the day to day context of patients' lives in the community at large.

"Cigarette advertising has grown larger than ever around the world, yet we still have failed to mobilize public anger toward it," Blum continued. ". . . Nowhere has the tobacco industry been more successful in creating a positive association with cigarettes than through sports sponsorship. In the United States the rising tragic trend is that of ethnic marketing. More than 56 million Americans still smoke, and their average age and educational attainment is lower than ever.

"Tobacco companies continue to provide research funding to medical schools, as if to imply that more research is necessary to settle what the industry calls the smoking and health 'controversy.' It is essential that tobacco companies be identified by the public for that they really produce.

"Hence, in the U.S., it is essential that we refer to them as Cancer's Seven Warning Signs: Philip Morris, RJR, Nabisco, BAT, American Brands, Loews, Liggett, and UST."