

**CONFIDENTIAL:
MINNESOTA TOBACCO LITIGATION**

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**CLAIMS THAT CIGARETTES ARE ADDICTIVE
IRRESPONSIBLE AND SCARE TACTICS**

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Clearly, the report issued by the Surgeon General's office today is politically rather than scientifically motivated. After all, the Surgeon General's opposition to smoking is well known, as is his goal of a "smoke free society by the year 2000."

Today's report is extensive and will require review before any specific comments can be made, however, general comments are in order.

The claim that cigarette smoking is a drug addiction similar to cocaine, heroin, or alcohol use is irresponsible. The message to the American public, and in particular American youth, is that using illegal drugs, such as crack or heroin, or alcohol has the same risk of addiction is smoking. To convey this message is to invite disaster and trivialize the serious drug problem faced by society.

If young people believe the government and equate heroin addiction with smoking, how can they possibly understand the true horrors of drug use and withdrawal? If, instead, one recognizes the Surgeon General's report for what it is, a biased "scare" tactic, then what credibility will be given to reports by the government on real drug use? Young people see others giving up smoking every day. If they see the government is not telling them the truth about giving up smoking, then why should they believe the government on the effects of illegal drugs?

The claim that cigarette smoking causes physical dependence is the heart of the Surgeon General's Report. But this is also the heart of its weakness. After years of well-funded research, it has not been established that cigarette smoking produces a physical dependence to nicotine. In fact, it has been impossible to establish that the feelings persons have upon giving up smoking are anything but that which would be expected when one is frustrated by giving up any desired habit.

In the hyperbole which surrounds the claimed "physical dependence" to smoking, it is often overlooked that physical dependence to caffeine has long been recognized, as well as the resulting "physical withdrawal" symptoms such as headache. The claim that there is a physical dependence to smoking is simply a desperate attempt to find some way to differentiate smoking from other habits.

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The Surgeon General has repeatedly stated that his goal is a smokeless society; that he believes smoking is one of the most addictive drugs in society; and he has voiced his support for persons suing tobacco companies. Consequently, it is not reasonable to expect that a report coming from his office would be objective in its views on the subject of cigarette smoking behavior.

Ironically, the Surgeon General's own figures indicate that more than 40 million Americans are former smokers, 95 percent of them having given up smoking without professional help. That doesn't mirror any common-sense description of addiction.

Smoking is truly a personal choice which can be stopped when a person decides to do so. The result of this report is likely to be a distrust of government pronouncements on hard drug use, and the providing of an excuse to persons not to give up smoking since, according to the Surgeon General, giving up smoking is as difficult as giving up a drug addiction.

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