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FOR THE TOBACCO INSTITUTE

PROGRAM Eyewitness News STATION WVII-TV
DATE August 6, 1992 5:30 P.M. CITY Bangor, ME
SUBJECT Campaign to Reduce Youth Smoking

DAVE GILBERT: I'm sure everyone knows smoking is really a habit that can kill you, and many people pick up this bad habit during their teenage years. But as Vivian Vedel reports, of all the people you'd think of, the tobacco industry is now asking youngsters to think twice before they pick up that first cigarette.

VIVIAN VEDEL: What you are seeing is just part of a public service announcement from the tobacco industry and education experts. The commercial is aimed at parents of youngsters who want to teach their children about the dangers of smoking.

WALKER MERRYMAN [Vice President, Tobacco Institute]: This public service announcement promotes the free availability of a booklet we have for parents. It's called "Tobacco: Helping Youth Say No." And it gives parents some common-sense advice on how they can steer their kids away from the peer pressure they encounter to smoke, as well as to do lots of other things that their parents don't want them doing.

VEDEL: Respiratory therapists at St. Joseph's Hospital suggest it's a good idea to remind youngsters about the dangers of smoking, since it's easier never to have started than to have to break the habit.

KAREN WALDWELL: Their lungs aren't really in the formative stage yet. The danger is the fact that they're young to establish that pattern, to establish that addiction to nicotine, and it gives them more of their lifetime to do damage to their lungs.

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VEDEL: Although the public service announcements could cost the tobacco industry some potential customers, officials say they want to make sure young kids aren't making adult decisions just outside of peer pressure.

Vivian Vedel, Channel 7 Eyewitness News.