

## Drop-In Article

### The Influence of Media on Tobacco Use

*The Role of the Media in Promoting and Reducing Tobacco Use*, the 19th monograph published in the National Cancer Institute Tobacco Control Monograph series, finds that the mass media affects attitudes and behaviors toward tobacco use.

This monograph presents important facts about media and tobacco use, including:

- Youth are influenced to start smoking by tobacco advertising and promotions
- Depictions of tobacco in movies prompt adolescents to start smoking
- Televised media campaigns can reduce tobacco use
- The tobacco industry and its supporters have used various media strategies to counter tobacco control measures and messages
- Media, including new and nontraditional forms, such as the Internet and video games, will continue to influence tobacco use in the future

“With more than 4,000 American teenagers smoking their first cigarette each day, the monograph’s finding that media has a powerful influence on youth smoking needs to inform future tobacco control programs and research efforts,” said Cathy Backinger, Ph.D., chief, Tobacco Control Research Branch, National Cancer Institute.

Tobacco use is still the single largest cause of preventable death in the United States. About 20 percent of American adults still smoke. Cigarettes are one of the most heavily marketed products in the United States, and the industry spent \$13.5 billion (in 2006 dollars)—\$37 million per day on average—on cigarette advertising and promotion.

“The media have been used to promote cigarettes and smoking through infamous advertising icons—such as the Marlboro Man and Joe Camel—and through tobacco images in Hollywood movies. The media have also been used to increase smoking cessation and reduce smoking initiation, through paid advertising campaigns and public service announcements about the dangers of smoking. This monograph presents the most current and comprehensive analysis of the scientific evidence on the impact of these forces, and other media exposures, on beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors concerning tobacco use,” said Ronald M. Davis, M.D., senior scientific editor and director, Center for Health Promotion & Disease Prevention, Henry Ford Health System.

View the full text of the monograph online at <http://www.cancercontrol.cancer.gov/tcrb/monographs/19/index.html> or order the publication by calling the NCI Cancer Information Service at 1-800-4-CANCER (1-800-422-6237). Ask for NIH Publication No. 07-6242.

The Tobacco Control Monograph Series, established in 1991 by the National Cancer Institute, provides ongoing and timely information about emerging public health issues in smoking and tobacco use control. Recent titles include: *Greater Than the Sum: Systems Thinking in Tobacco Control*; *Evaluating ASSIST — A Blueprint for Understanding State-level Tobacco Control*; and *ASSIST — Shaping the Future of Tobacco Prevention and Control*. To view past monographs, visit <http://cancercontrol.cancer.gov/tcrb/monographs/>.