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AMERICAN  LUNG ASSOCIATION
The 'Christmas Seal' People®

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March 19, 1982

The President
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

The many volunteers of our organization throughout the country are distressed over reports in the press indicating a reversal of the Administration's position on the Comprehensive Smoking Prevention Education bill.

Less than a week after House hearings in which Secretary Brandt and Surgeon General Koop gave their unqualified support to this legislation, it was reported that the Administration changed its position at the Senate hearings. The American Lung Association is upset at this lack of attention to a public health problem which claims 340,000 lives annually. We are concerned that the symbolism of the Administration's commitment to prevention of disease is at stake.

It appears to us that the country is moving more and more toward accepting strong national leadership in the anti-smoking campaign. It is very disturbing to witness a reluctance on the part of our national leaders to grasp this opportunity at a time when the evidence indicting cigarette smoking as a major cause of disease and death has become so overwhelming.

Emphysema, one of the diseases affecting the patient population with which our organization is closely concerned, is an irreversible condition which condemns the patient to a frightening existence where he battles for every breath. It has been said that if every smoker spent an hour with a patient in the terminal throes of emphysema, most would quickly become ex-smokers.

Emphysema has risen to become the fifth cause of death in the U.S. The recent Surgeon General's Report on Smoking and Cancer estimates that 30 percent of all cancer deaths are caused by smoking. In the face of such staggering statistics, how can the Administration turn away from its responsibilities to help educate the American people about the dangers of this insidious habit?

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The major voluntary health agencies have recently banded together in a Coalition on Smoking OR Health in order to be more effective in anti-smoking education, yet the role of the federal government is critical to success. It is especially hard to understand the government's stance when for a modest expenditure of funds millions of dollars can be saved on medical care costs and disability payments.

Sincerely,

Edmund C. Casey, M.D.

Edmund C. Casey, M.D.
President

cc: Richard S. Schweiker, Secretary of HHS
Edward N. Brandt, Jr., M.D., Assistant Secretary for Health
C. Everett Koop, M.D., Surgeon General ✓
Senator Orrin G. Hatch
Senator Bob Packwood
Congressman Henry A. Waxman

bcc *Robert L. ...*
Joanne L. ... M.D.

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