

American Cancer Society in Oregon Urges Attorney General Hardy Myers To Reject Tobacco Settlement

Portland-

Attorney General Hardy Myers has been given less than a week by the tobacco industry to accept or reject Oregon's participation in the largest legal settlement in the history of the United States. If implemented, this settlement will impact the public health, for better or worse, for decades to come.

Due to the wholly inadequate review period, the American Cancer Society in Oregon urges Attorney General Myers to reject the settlement. Preliminary analysis of the

agreement by public health experts raises the following concerns:

The settlement allows tobacco companies to continue marketing to children as long as that is not their primary intent.

The settlement does not hold the industry accountable if youth smoking increases. There are no look-back provisions in the agreement to financially punish tobacco companies if they continue to market to children.

The settlement permits the industry to keep secret many of its most incriminating documents.

The amount of financial compensation to the state is inadequate. The industry is paying nothing for its past misconduct. Former US Surgeon General C. Everett Koop, former FDA Commissioner David Kessler, the New York Times and others have pointed out that the size of the settlement will result in an insignificant price increase that will not substantially discourage youth smoking and save lives.

The settlement does not restrict vending machine sales, self-service displays, internet sales, or in-store advertising.

The exceptions in the settlement to brand name sponsorship of events with significant youth appeal are so broad as to undermine their effectiveness.

The settlement permit poster-sized signs and placards in video game arcades.

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The settlement does not restrict the industry from challenging the regulatory efforts of the FDA and EPA, or to actively oppose ingredi-

ent disclosure efforts.

The settlement permits future state lawsuits to redress past industry misconduct on second hand smoke even though such claims were not made in any of the state suits being settled. Similarly, the settlement permits future state lawsuits to redress past misconduct by industry executives, attorneys, agents, advertisers, distributors and retailers even though none were defendants in the suits being settled.

The settlement does not prevent the industry from mounting new challenges after agreeing to dismiss its

pending legal actions related to underage smoking and second hand smoke.

The settlement does not restrict the industry from lobbying state to divert the settlement proceeds from tobacco control uses.

These and other problems with the settlement should be fully explored by Attorney General Myers, with input from the public health community. If this is a good deal for Oregon today it will still be a good deal after a thorough inspection by experts whose motives, unlike the tobacco industry's, are not profit-driven.

Hundreds Die from Restraints at Psychiatric Facilities

Hartford, Connecticut-

Hundreds of people have died across the country from restraints at psychiatric facilities, according to the Hartford Courant Newspaper.

The Courant investigated all psychiatric hospital deaths since 1988, and found 142 deaths were related to the use of physical restraints or mechanical restraints. The paper commissioned experts from Harvard to review the data, and they determined that hundreds more cases have not been reported, and that between 50 and 150 such deaths occur in psychiatric facilities each year.

The details of the death include a number that occur within the last year, including: Roshelle Clayborne, a 16-year old girl who was pinned face down to the ground by adult psychiatric workers at a facility in San Antonio, Texas.

She complained she couldn't breathe, went limp, then urinated, defecated, and vomited blood after being given an injection of Thorazine. Rather than check her vital signs, workers dragged her soiled body into a seclusion room based on the prior orders of a psychiatrist. She was later found dead there.

Edith Campos, a 15-year old girl who was restrained by an adult male after a confrontation in which she would not give staff a family photo she was clutching. The adult psychiatric technician laid across her back while she was pinned face down, and she died of asphyxiation.

Andrew McClain, an 11-year old boy who died of asphyxiation after a restraint. He was pinned face down with arms in front of his chest, while a psychiatric worker was on top of him.

Tristan Sovren, a 16-year old boy who died of asphyxiation after a restraint. He was held face down on the floor, and a towel was shoved in his mouth.

Gary Shannon, of the Citizens Commission of Human Rights, an organization established in 1969 by the Church of Scientology to investigate and expose psychiatric violations of human rights, called for an end to the restraint deaths.

"We could put an end to these deaths by holding the psychiatrists who order the restraints and the psychiatric workers who carry them out criminally liable in the case of any death.

Also, standing orders, whereby a psychiatrist orders restraints, chemical injection, and/or seclusion without seeing the patient should be illegal.

The primary thing to keep in mind with regard to these restraints deaths is that the rea-

son they occur is that some psychiatrist ordered a restraint, a drugging, or a seclusion that was not safe.

The psychiatrists should be held criminally responsible for any such deaths, and they should face licensing sanctions anytime someone in their care dies of an unsafe procedure that was carried out under their orders of supervision."

The Hartford Courant newspaper further found:

• 23 deaths were associated with being face down to the floor restraints

• 20 deaths were associated with being left unattended in mechanical restraints for hours.

• 33 percent of the deaths occurred due to lack of oxygen

• 26 percent of the deaths were attributed to heart related causes

The Citizens Commission of Human Rights was established in 1969 by the Church of Scientology, and has a 30-year history of denouncing human rights violations in the field of psychiatry.

CCHR has been commended by the United Nations for their work, which has resulted in numerous reforms in the field of mental health internationally.

Statement on Sodium Intake and High Blood Pressure

High blood pressure, or hypertension, affects about 50 million Americans—one in four adults. It is the leading cause of stroke and contributes to heart attack, heart failure, and kidney failure. Some

Americans, such as older Americans and African Americans, are at a particularly high risk from high blood pressure. The National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI) supports a range of research, including epidemiological and clinical studies, to help Americans and their health care professionals better prevent and control high blood pressure.

As part of this public health effort, the NHLBI works with other public and private sector organizations to develop clinical practice guidelines based on reviews of the scientific literature. The latest hypertension

guidelines were released in November 1997. The NHLBI also conducts periodic reviews on topics such as dietary sodium as new findings are published.

One important aspect of hypertension prevention and management that has raised questions among scientists and in the media is the effect of sodium consumption on blood pressure. Sodium chloride, or table salt, increases average levels of blood pressure. Some individuals have greater blood pressure responses to salt than others.

Various controlled intervention trials and observational studies have provided strong evidence that consuming a moderately reduced intake of sodium contributes to lowering blood pressure. As yet, science cannot distinguish between those whose

blood pressures are and are not more responsive to sodium. Available evidence shows that a moderately reduced intake of dietary sodium causes no harm. Thus, a moderate salt intake is recommended for all Americans to help prevent and treat hypertension, especially in those who are responsive to sodium.

Recently, more research findings have become available about the effects of dietary sodium and salt in those with and without high blood pressure. For instance, the Trials of Hypertension Prevention, Phase II (TOHP II), published in 1997, found that short-term sodium reduction and weight loss each lowered blood pressure in those who were overweight and had slightly elevated blood pressures. However, the interventions did not fully maintain weight loss and

sodium reduction over 3 to 4 years and the effects on blood pressure reduction were lessened. In 1998, the Trial of Nonpharmacologic Interventions in the Elderly (TONE), a multicenter clinical trial, reported that lifestyle changes—dietary salt reduction, weight loss, or both together—reduced blood pressures in older patients with hypertension, decreasing their need for medication. In a 1997 article, the trial of Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) described the effects on blood pressure of entire eating plans. DASH found that, without testing the effect of salt reduction, a diet lower in fat and higher in vegetables, fruits, and low fat dairy foods significantly reduced blood pressure in those with normal to slightly elevated pressures.

Wyden Calls for Minority Concerns to be Included In New Tobacco Settlement

Washington, DC

U.S. Senator Ron Wyden (D-Ore.) today called on state attorneys general negotiating a settlement with the seven major tobacco companies to include provisions benefiting minority citizens in any settlement that they agree to. When Congress considered tobacco legislation earlier this year, Wyden worked with members of the Congressional Black and Hispanic Caucuses to include provisions in that bill ensuring that a

portion of anti-smoking research and education would be targeted towards minority communities.

In a letter Washington State Attorney General Christine Gregoire, the lead negotiator for the Attorneys General, Wyden wrote, "I urge you not to forget the decades of targeting of minorities by the tobacco companies which has resulted in staggering health and financial impacts for the nation's African-American, Asian-American, Hispanic, and Native-American communities."

"Before you agree to any settlement," Wyden wrote Gregoire, "I hope you will make certain that minority communities have access to effective smoking cessation programs, and to ensure that no minority children are sacrificed to tobacco company profits. Just as the opportunity, and responsibility, to ensure that these communities have the financial resource to begin repairing the damage."

In his letter, Wyden cited data from the Centers for Disease con-

trol showing that smoking rates among African American high school students rose 80% in recent years, with dramatic rises also occurring among Hispanic, Asian American and American Indian teenagers.

The previous settlement agreed to by the attorney general and the tobacco companies failed to receive Congressional approval. They are now attempting to reach a second settlement, news reports, an agreement is expected shortly.



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