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The American Medical Association

SPECIAL NOTE....On December 4, 1963, the House of Delegates of the American Medical Association approved the proposal of its Board of Trustees (described in news release below) and appropriated \$500,000 to initiate the project.

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NEWS RELEASE from

THE AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

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For Immediate Release

PORTLAND, ORE., Dec. 3 -- The American Medical Association Board of Trustees today proposed "a comprehensive program of research on tobacco and health" to discover which human ailments may be caused or aggravated by smoking, how they may be caused and what properties of smoke may be the guilty agent.

The Board's proposal is subject to approval by the AMA's policy-making House of Delegates which convened in Portland today for its annual fall meeting.

The Board's statement to the House said that "so many gaps exist in knowledge about the relationship of smoking to health it is the belief of the Board that an intensive, long-range research program such as is proposed is imperative."

If authorized by the House, the project would be initiated by the AMA's Education and Research Foundation, a separate corporate entity from the AMA itself.

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The Board recommended that the long-range program be financed by a substantial contribution from the AMA with contributions solicited from other sources -- industry, foundations, voluntary health agencies and physicians.

The Board emphasized that, if the program is authorized, contributions will be received "only if they are given without restrictions."

"A director for this project," the Board said, "will be procured whose experience, qualifications and integrity will assure that such a research project will be conducted effectively, exhaustively and with complete objectivity."

The Board said that "a mass of statistical information has been developed indicating certain relationships between smoking and disease which cannot be ignored, even though the significance of them in terms of cause and effect is still being debated."

"The proposed research projects," the Board said, "would be designed to probe beyond statistical evidence, to search for answers not now available to such questions as which diseases in man may be caused or induced by the use of tobacco. Determination needs to be made whether some element or elements in smoke may be a direct or aggravating cause of cancer and other diseases and to identify these substances chemically. Questions of constitutional or physiologic factors, or psychological dependence, and of habituation require answers. Continuing and further clinical and pathologic studies need to be made along with collection and correlation of statistical data as it is collected to establish what relationships exist between the use of tobacco and disease. Since smoking may produce a tranquilizing effect as well as other favorable psychic reactions not so well identified, these factors need further study in evaluating the whole matter of the relationship of tobacco and disease."

The Board also said that "this complex problem contains extraordinary social, legislative and economic implications."

"For example," the Board said, "the habit-forming characteristics of smoking, and the fact that many millions of people indulge in smoking, would appear to make strict legal prohibition unrealistic, even if causal relationships were irrefutably established.

"Because of these social, legislative and economic aspects of the problem and because so many gaps exist in knowledge about the relationship of smoking to health, it is the belief of the Board that an intensive long-range research program such as is proposed is imperative."

Since smoking has been declared by some to be a national health problem, the Board said, it is logical that the American Medical Association, as a national organization with historic concern for all matters affecting public health, should be the organization to sponsor such a research project through the Education and Research Foundation it has established. In fact, the Board said, the AMA-ERF is in a unique position in this respect because of the professional stature of the AMA, which would insure public confidence in such a tobacco research project, because of its ability to encourage the talented research personnel necessary for an endeavor of this magnitude, because of the AMA's position in contributing and obtaining funds from other groups for these purposes, and because of the ability of the AMA to communicate rapidly and widely information to the profession and the public.

The AMA-ERF, the Board said, is in a position to and would conduct such a research project along the lines of (1) a continuing survey of the literature on the subject, (2) initiating research on tobacco and disease, and (3) coordinating research carried out by others. The AMA itself will utilize various avenues in communicating the results of the research studies as they become available.

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