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AMA Again Declares Smoking, Cancer Link; Sees Cigaret 'Hazard'

Group Stops Short of Saying
Cigaretts Are Cancer Cause;
Hazards Will Be Publicized

By WALL STREET JOURNAL Staff Reporter

SAN FRANCISCO—The American Medical Association again declared that there is "a significant relationship between cigaret smoking and the incidence of lung cancer and certain other diseases" and labeled smoking a "serious health hazard."

But the organization didn't flatly say smoking causes lung cancer or other diseases.

The "new" AMA position on smoking was voted by the House of delegates, the group's policy-making body, which accepted in whole recommendations by its reference committee on occupational health and public health. AMA spokesmen said the statement "clarifies" the group's position on cigarets and health but can't be considered stronger than previous AMA statements on the subject.

The committee, in fact, found the AMA already "is on record and does recognize" significant relationship between cigaret smoking and certain diseases.

The statement approved by the delegates, unlike several resolutions submitted to the reference committee by state delegations, didn't cite any "causal relationship" between cigaret smoking and disease. However, the final statement was approved by voice vote with no open dissension. One member of the reference committee said the question of a "causal relationship" was considered but that the committee finally decided that such a relationship currently can't be deemed absolutely certain.

A spokesman for Hill & Knowlton, Inc., public relations counsel for the Tobacco Institute, an industry trade group, said he was "pleased" by the AMA's statement.

In some respects, the AMA did prepare the

groundwork for strengthening its position on cigaret smoking, even though it fell short of actually stating that smoking causes disease. The house of delegates declared the AMA's pamphlet, *Smoking: Facts You Should Know*, is "in need of modification" and called for a revision "in the light of accumulating knowledge." This pamphlet, aimed at laymen, currently cites "possible" health damage caused by smoking and has been criticized by AMA members for not stressing such dangers sufficiently.

Besides urging continuation of anti-smoking programs in schools, the delegates voted to develop new programs "to disseminate this vital health education material on the hazards of smoking to all age groups through all available means of communication."

And the delegates declared the AMA should "take great pride" in acceptance of \$10 million in grants for the AMA education research foundation from the tobacco industry research council, composed of major cigaret makers. The grants are financing research to pinpoint factors in cigaret smoke that may cause disease and to determine methods of eliminating them.

In another controversial area, the delegates declared the AMA is "unalterably opposed to the denial of membership, privileges and responsibilities in county medical societies and state medical associations to any duly licensed physician because of race, color, religion, ethnic affiliation, or national origin." The delegates called on "all state medical associations, all component societies, and all individual members of the American Medical Association to exert every effort to end every instance in which such equal rights, privileges or responsibilities are denied." In voting this resolution, however, delegates bypassed one calling for the AMA "to deny the rights and privileges of membership" to members of any AMA unit that practices such discrimination.

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