

# Children's Health Update

## Smoking In Movies Can Lead To Youngsters Lighting Up

(NAPSA)—Concerned parents and public health leaders are looking to stub out images of smoking in film—at least, in movies aimed at a youthful audience. That's because multiple studies show that tobacco images in media—especially in movies—can influence young people's decision to start smoking.

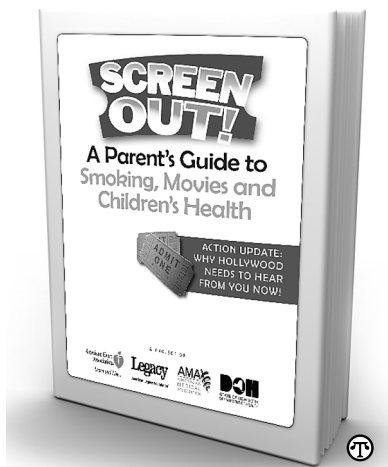
The American Legacy Foundation, a national public health foundation dedicated to building a world where young people reject tobacco and anyone can quit, says Hollywood must address this cause of youth smoking now. Foundation President and CEO Dr. Cheryl Heaton, Dr. PH. recently testified before Congress on the subject.

Studies indicate that exposure to on-screen tobacco imagery recruits 390,000 new smokers a year—120,000 of whom will ultimately die from tobacco-related disease.

The foundation urges any parent who wants to get involved to visit its Web site ([www.americanlegacy.org](http://www.americanlegacy.org)) to download the Screen Out! Guide, a toolkit parents can use to protect children from what they see on screen.

Legacy is one of several national public health organizations around the country—including the American Medical Association and American Heart Association—that have called on the movie industry to implement voluntary policy solutions that would make movies smoke-free, including rating any new movie with smoking "R" and inserting anti-smoking public service announcements (PSAs) before any movie with smoking.

The Walt Disney Company recently announced it would not include smoking in its Disney-



**Parents can urge movie studios to keep smoking out of youth-rated films. For a list of current movies with smoking, visit [www.smokefreemovies.ucsf.edu](http://www.smokefreemovies.ucsf.edu).**

branded films and would show anti-smoking PSAs before its movies. Other studios are slowly following suit with their own smoke-free-movies policies.

The foundation's latest research on the issue found that the majority of youth-rated films still contain smoking, and movies depict smoking in a nonrealistic way that may give young people a more favorable attitude about this deadly and addictive behavior.

"The only way to counter the effect of smoking in movies is to get smoking out of the movies that kids see," Heaton said. "An R rating can reduce youth exposure to movie smoking by as much as half, potentially saving hundreds of thousands of lives a year."

To learn more about the national Smoke-Free Movies campaign, visit [www.smokefree movies.ucsf.edu](http://www.smokefree movies.ucsf.edu).