

James L. Holly, M.D.

Summary of the 7th Annual Gift of Life Health Forum: Smoking Cessation and Prevention

By James L. Holly, MD

Your Life Your Health

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“There has not been a better method for delivery of a self-modulated dose of a psychoactive, addictive substance (nicotine) than the cigarette.” (Outstanding quote of the Conference)

On October 5, 2006, the 7th Annual Health Forum was held in Beaumont. This is a joint presentation of the Julie Rogers “Gift of Life” Program and the Jefferson Count Medical Society. This year’s program entitled, “Smoking Cessation and Prevention” was presented in partnership with the Lamar University Department of Nursing, the Dauphin Cancer Screening and Prevention Center and The University of Texas M. D. Anderson Cancer Center. All of the lectures were provide by M. D. Anderson.

All of Southeast Texas should express gratitude to Ms. Regina Rogers and the Julie Rogers “Gift of Life” for the many contributions they make to the health and welfare of our area. Ms. Rogers has carried on the legacy of community involvement and philanthropy which her mother and father, Mr. and Mrs. Ben Rogers, began many years ago. Unless any one thinks that her commitment is simply financial, Ms. Rogers was up until 4:00 AM of the day of the conference making final preparations for this event. For the medical community, let me say, “Thank you, Ms. Rogers,” for your personal effort to improve the quality of life of all Southeast Texans.

Today’s column is a compilation of quotations and summations from this program which was attended by over 800 health professions. Repeatedly the presenters of the conference praised Beaumont for the forward thinking of banning the public use of tobacco. They repeatedly presented evidence that the feared economic consequences of this ban will not develop.

Human Cost of Lung Cancer which is caused by

In 1950, lung cancer became the number one killer of adult males in the United States. In 1987, lung cancer became the number one killer of adult females in the United States. Between 1995 and 1999, the annual United States’ deaths attributable to smoking were over 400,000.

In the absence of smoking and/or exposure to second hand smoke, lung cancer is a rare and unusual disease. Prior to the 20th Century, lung cancer was rare because tobacco smoke was so harsh, few people inhaled it. In 1919, Dr. Alton Ochsner who was then a medical student was summoned to watch an autopsy of a patient with lung cancer. His mentor told him, “You will never see another one.”

The cancer of the late 1800s and the early 1900s was tuberculosis. Because TB was transmitted by spittle, spittoons were banned and spitting on sidewalks was banned. The cigarette companies began to advertise that smoking cigarettes was safer than spitting tobacco. In the 20th Century, tobacco companies found ways to make smoke milder so that they could encourage people to inhale. In the 1920s and 1930s advertising campaigns encouraged people to inhale tobacco smoke.

Among 1000 twenty-year-olds who smoke regularly, six will be murdered, twelve will die in motor vehicle accidents and 500 will be killed by smoking. One half of all smokers will die from their smoking.

Out of 100,000 people, one will die from asbestos in school buildings; three will die from lightning; 1,600 will die from motor vehicle accidents and 21,900 will die from tobacco. Worldwide in 2003, 4.9 million people died from tobacco. By 2030, it is estimated that 10 million will die per year from tobacco. Annually, 5 trillion cigarettes are smoked.

Economic Cost of Smoking

In 1998/1999, the cost of treating smoking related illnesses in Texas was \$10.09 billion. Direct Medical expenditures were \$4.95 billion and lost productivity costs were \$5.54 billion. In 1998, 15% of all Texas Medicaid expenditures were spent on smoking-related illnesses and diseases. This represented \$1.27 billion or \$544 per Texas Medicaid recipient.

In 2003, the Tobacco industry spent \$15.15 billion dollars on advertising and promotion in the U.S. Approximately \$1.06 billion was spent in Texas in 2003. That represents over \$2.9 million every single day. The state of Texas has appropriated less than \$12 million out of the multiple billions of dollars received in the lawsuit against the tobacco companies for the prevention of cigarette smoking. Texans are losing the battle with tobacco. When it is recognized that the current governor's chief of staff is a former tobacco lobbyist, it is little wonder that more money is not appropriated for this effort.

The most dangerous Product in the World – tobacco

Nicotine makes ALL other things less pleasurable. Once addicted, smokers often call their cigarettes, "their best friend," as they get decreasing pleasure from social interaction and other pleasurable stimuli. The science of nicotine addiction is complex. It involves both environmental and genetic factors. It is increasingly better understood and it demonstrates that the addictive potential of nicotine is real and it is serious.

Some argue that cigarettes are legal products and therefore cannot be regulated. At one time or another in this country, the following were legal also: morphine, heroin, cocaine, non-voting women and slavery.

Cigarette smoke produces 4-100,000 different chemicals. 70 produced cancer and some of these toxic and carcinogenic chemicals are present in higher quantities in second hand

smoke. Why? The smoke inhaled by the smoker is 300 degrees; the smoke to which non-smokers are exposed is 900 degrees. Since September 11, 2001, five people have died of anthrax but 2,000,000 have died from tobacco.

In 1906, the Federal Drug Act was passed by the congress. This covered all drugs sold in the United States and listed in the US Pharmacopoeia. In the 1890 edition of the Pharmacopoeia, tobacco was listed but was removed in 1905.

Who promoted tobacco so that it could become the number one consumer product in the world?

The tobacco companies, in contravention of their agreement in multiple lawsuits, continue to target children as their “next generation” profit centers. As evidence of that, the tobacco companies have paid movie producers to show the use of tobacco products in the following movies: *The Muppet Movie*, *The In-Laws*, *The Fish that Saved Pittsburg*, *Love at First Bite*, *Who Framed Roger Rabbit*, *The Wrong Guys*, and many others.

On November 25, 1933, the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, “After careful consideration of the extent to which cigarettes were used by physicians in practice, “*JAMA* published its first cigarette ad. In 1933, the United States congress passed legislation establishing price supports for the production of tobacco. In 1934, the Garrison Act outlawed marijuana and other drugs but not tobacco.

In 1939, Drs. Oschner and DeBakey, in a medical journal article on primary pulmonary malignancies said, “Chronic irritation of the bronchial mucosa is probably the most important etiological factor. Repeated inhalation of smoke over long periods of time is believed to be a prominent, irritative factor.”

In the 1950s, the first large epidemiology studies showed that smoking causes lung cancer and T.V. advertising of tobacco went up 50%. In 1952, the first filter cigarettes were produced. The filter was made of asbestos. The asbestos producers demanded and received a 100% indemnity agreement from the tobacco companies from liability for their use of asbestos in the filters. In the 1950s and early 1960s 50% of all television shows were sponsored by tobacco companies.

What the tobacco companies knew about nicotine.

On July 17, 1963, Addison Yeaman, General Counsel to Brown and Williamson Tobacco Company said, “Nicotine is addictive... We are in the business of selling nicotine, an addictive drug.” In that same year, another tobacco executive said, “The nicotine level of cigarettes was not obtained by accident... we can regulate, fairly precisely, the nicotine and sugar levels to almost any desired level management might require.”

In 1972, William Dunn, Senior Research Scientist for Phillip Morris said, “The cigarette should be conceived not as a product, but as a package. The product is nicotine. Think of the cigarette pack as a storage container for a day’s supply of nicotine. Think of a puff of

smoke as the vehicle of nicotine. We now possess knowledge of the effects of nicotine far more extensive than exist in published scientific literature. Moreover, nicotine is addictive, we are then in the business of selling nicotine, an addictive drug.”

Who has protected the tobacco industry?

The following presidents of the United States have either hired major tobacco lobbyists (Jimmy Carter, George H. W. Bush) appeared in advertisements promoting tobacco use (Ronald Reagan) or been called the “the best president tobacco can buy (George W. Bush). Texas Governor Rick Perry, who has done nothing to support those opposing tobacco use, and therefore to protect the public coffers from the economic hazards of tobacco, hired a tobacco lobbyist as his current Chief of Staff.

When the former Attorney General of Texas, Dan Morales, sought out-side counsel to represent the state of Texas against the tobacco companies, twenty defense firms turned him down as they had a conflict of interest. They represented tobacco companies. When plaintiff attorneys accepted his offer and beat the tobacco companies, the Attorney General then tired to sue them for their success.

Congressman Delay regularly flew on tobacco company corporate jets. And, Senator Bill Frist, Majority leader of the United States Senate said, concerning taxes on tobacco, “The ultimate decision (about whether to smoke) is a family’s...even for children...I don’t want to put punitive taxes on that industry to fund healthcare.” Another physician politician, Congressman Roy Rowlands said, “I realize that tobacco may not be particularly good for the individual, however I realize the negative impact the tax would have toward the loss of jobs of our citizens. I am against any large tax increase to fund a healthcare program.” He added that some of his colleagues in Washington “should look into some mental health coverage by virtue of their incessant attack on the tobacco industry.” John Boehner, House Majority Leader, handed out checks from the tobacco industry on the House Floor in 21995. This act violated the rules of the House of Representatives.

Comparing the Ethics of Enron and the Philip Morris Tobacco Companies:

Executives of both lied to congress and were never charged with perjury. Executives of both shredded documents which proved their conspiracy of silence. Only Phillip Morris hired scientists to lie for them. Only Phillip Morris sold addictive products to kids. Only Phillip Morris kills 200,000+ people per years. On Enron executives were prosecuted for criminal acts, while both committed fraud against the public interest.

Conclusion

Southeast Texas is grateful to the Gift of Life for this program. Beaumont should be proud to be smoke free. Texas should be ashamed that it is not. In 2008, the nation of France will follow Ireland in banning smoking in all public places according to current reports. Texas and the United States should beat France to that goal. Remember, it is your life and it is your health.