

BURRELLE'S

75 EAST NORTHFIELD ROAD / LIVINGSTON / NEW JERSEY 07039
(973) 992-6600 / (800) 631-1160

World Wide Web Edition

Los Angeles (CA) Times - Print Circ 1,021,121

Date of Publication: 10/13/99

Account Number: 6213LR

Headline: Philip Morris' New Campaign Echoes Medical Experts

Source Website: <http://www.latimes.com>

Tobacco giant Philip Morris Cos. has acknowledged that there is overwhelming evidence that cigarette smoking causes lung cancer and other diseases, in a series of public statements that all but merge the company's stands on smoking and health with the views of leading medical experts.

The statements appear on a new company Web site being launched today as part of a lavish image-building campaign for Philip Morris, the world's biggest cigarette maker and a leading marketer of food and beer through its Kraft Foods and Miller Brewing units.

Although the tobacco industry has been backing away in recent years from its past denials that smoking is harmful, the new statements appear to be a far more frank admission of the risks.

Along with statements about the dangers of smoking, the Web site says that smoking is addictive. It stops short of agreement that secondhand smoke is a proven cause of lung cancer and heart disease but says adults should minimize smoking around children to avoid endangering their health.

The Web site is being launched along with an expensive TV ad campaign highlighting Philip Morris' efforts to combat a series of social problems.

The company and its rivals face a flood of lawsuits over illnesses linked to smoking and secondhand smoke, along with key legal battles over efforts to regulate the industry. It was uncertain if the Philip Morris statements might signal a change in courtroom strategy, though it appeared by their wording that certain of the company's traditional legal defenses might remain intact.

Philip Morris' public positions, and those of industry rivals, have been evolving over time from the absolute denials and scathing attacks on the U.S. surgeon general that made them an object of widespread derision. In recent years, for example, the companies and their lawyers have acknowledged that smoking is a "risk factor" for cancer and other ailments, while stopping short of calling it a cause.

Certain of the Web site statements are striking, however, for how little there is to distinguish them from the views of scientific and health organizations.

On the risks to smokers, the Web site says: "There is an overwhelming medical and scientific consensus that cigarette smoking causes lung cancer, heart disease, emphysema and other serious diseases. . . . Smokers are far more likely to develop serious diseases, like lung cancer, than nonsmokers. There is no 'safe' cigarette. These are and have been the messages of public health authorities worldwide. Smokers and potential smokers should rely on these messages in making all smoking-related decisions."

Concerning addiction, it says that "smoking is addictive, as that term is most commonly used today. It can be very difficult to quit smoking, but this should not deter smokers who want to quit from trying to do so."

81761000