

June 13, 2008



Rianna Brown  
Baltimore City Health Department  
210 Guilford Avenue  
Baltimore, MD 21202

Dear Ms. Brown:

A priority of the American Cancer Society is to reduce illness and deaths due to tobacco use including cigar smoking. The Society strongly supports prohibiting the sale of cigars unless sold in packages of five or more.

When sold by the single, cigars do not carry consumer health warnings yet research tells us cigar smoking increases the risk of oral cancer, lung cancer, cancer of the esophagus, and cancer of the larynx, as well as contributes to cardiovascular disease and respiratory ailments, and cigar smokers who inhale dramatically escalate their risk of developing lung cancer. Without the warning label, consumers can easily mistake cigar smoking as less harmful than cigarette smoking. Nothing could be further from the truth.

A single large cigar can contain as much tobacco as an entire pack of cigarettes. Like cigarettes, cigars can become addictive. One cigarette delivers 1 to 2 milligrams of nicotine, the substance in tobacco that causes addiction, while many cigars contain between 100 and 200 milligrams. There are cigars on the market that contain as many as 444 milligrams of nicotine. When cigar smoke is inhaled, nicotine is absorbed as rapidly as it is with cigarettes. Cigar smokers can get the desired dose of nicotine without inhaling the smoke into the lungs. For those who do not inhale, the nicotine is absorbed more slowly through the lining of the mouth. Cigar smoke dissolves more easily in saliva than cigarette smoke.

An estimated 5.3 billion cigars were consumed in the United States in 2006. This is a nine percent increase from the previous year. Most new cigar users today are teenagers and young adult males (ages 18 to 24). When available by the single, cheap manufactured cigars cost less than \$1. Enticed by the low price, the allure of appearing cool and the flavors the cigars often impart, young consumers are purchasing cigars at increasingly dangerous rates. According to surveys from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the level of cigar use among adolescents and teenagers in recent years has been higher than that of spit (oral tobacco) tobacco use. As of 2006, about 4% of teens aged 12 to 17 had smoked a cigar in the past month. In 2006, about 12% of Americans aged 18 to 25 had smoked a cigar within the last month.

**To reverse this often deadly trend and deter youth from initiating smoking cigars, the American Cancer Society strongly urges Baltimore City Health Department to adopt regulations requiring cigars be sold in packages of no less than five.**

Sincerely,

Bonita M. Pennino, MS  
State Government Relations Director

American Cancer Society South Atlantic Division, Inc.  
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