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San Francisco
Fiscal Year 2006-2007

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September 15, 2006

UC Regents
1111 Franklin Street, 12th Floor
Oakland, C 95607

Dear Regents:

The American Heart Association of the Western States Affiliate, urges you to take a leadership position by adopting a policy to not accept money from the tobacco industry. We supported the Regents 2001 decision to divest from tobacco industry holdings and also support a system-wide policy to decline new funding from tobacco companies in the form of contracts, grants, and gifts.

This action is particularly timely in light of the August 17th, 2006, ruling which found the tobacco companies to be racketeers. District of Columbia District Court Judge, Gladys Kessler (U.S.A. et al.v. Philip Morris Inc., et al.) that: (Cigarette makers) “suppressed research, they destroyed documents, they manipulated the use of nicotine so as to increase and perpetuate addiction, they distorted the truth about low-tar and light cigarettes so as to discourage smokers from quitting, and they abused the legal system in order to achieve their goal - - to make money with little, if any, regard for individual suffering, soaring health costs, or the integrity of the legal system.” (Cigarette makers profit from) “selling a highly addictive product which causes diseases that lead to a staggering number of deaths per year, an immeasurable amount of human suffering and economic loss and a profound burden on our nation’s health care system.”

The above finding makes it in unequivocally clear that tobacco companies lie, have always lied and will continue to lie.

The University works daily with patients struggling and suffering from their addiction to nicotine. How can it continue to enjoy a prestigious reputation for academic excellence and important, cutting-edge research and still be associated with the tobacco?

I am sure that we all agree that tobacco is bad for our health. Why can’t we agree that tobacco is not an appropriate association for the University?

Please adopt a policy and reject all tobacco industry funding for the University of California. By accepting future tobacco industry grants, gifts, or contract for research, the UC system would now be doing business with adjudicated racketeers.

Sincerely,

Gordon Fung, MD
Board member, American Heart Association