Addiction happens much faster than you think.

D. Discussion of Similarities and Differences of Preferred Messages

Based upon the responses to the messages listed above, each group selected their preferred messages and discussed the reasons why they chose certain messages over the others presented.

Phase II—Charlotte, Minneapolis, Houston, San Francisco

The primary objective of the groups in the cities outside the Washington, DC area was to further refine the list of appropriate messages and then develop presentation criteria that would make the brief statements most effective within the context of cigarette advertisements.

A. Discussion about Kids and Smoking

Participants were asked to talk about the number of their peers that smoked, reasons teenagers smoke, and situations in which teens would most likely be smoking. The topic of addiction and how teens perceive addiction also was discussed in many of the groups. Participants were told at the outset that whether or not they personally smoked was their own business, and that what the moderator was interested in was their perception of how teens in general regarded smoking. Participants also were told about and asked to discuss recent trends in the rate of adult and teen smokers.

B. Cigarette Advertising

Examples of cigarette ads on pasteboard displays were shown to the groups and the participants' familiarity with the ads, as well as their reactions to them, were discussed. The moderator also focused discussion upon the Surgeon General's warnings currently appearing on cigarette advertisements and elicited reactions to those warnings.

C. Presentation of New Brief Statements

Based upon the responses to the brief statements of the Calverton groups, seven message were tested in the focus groups held in Charlotte and Minneapolis. These messages were discussed individually and favorite messages were selected by each group. The messages presented included:

Smoking today leads to fewer tomorrows. Of the 3000 young people who begin smoking each day, 1000 will die from their smoking.

About one out of three kids who become smokers will die from their smoking.

Tobacco kills more Americans each year than AIDS, alcohol, accidents, murder, suicide, illegal drugs and fires \* \* \* combined.

Everyone now addicted to cigarettes started out "just trying" cigarettes.

Tobacco causes shortness of breath, coughing, yellow teeth and wrinkles.

Addiction happens much faster than you think.

In addition to the seven messages listed above, three new messages were tested in Houston and San Francisco. These messages were:

Smoking hurts your athletic performance. Addiction sucks you into a lifetime of smoking.

Non-smokers run faster than smokers.

D. Discussion of Message Format and Placement

Each group then was asked to discuss the issue of presentation of brief statements on advertisements. Using the pasteboards of existing advertisements, each group examined issues such as: the size of the message; position of the message; different types of boundaries; whether or not attribution of the message was effective (for example, attribution of a factual statement to the Centers for Disease Control); the use of icons to draw attention to a message; or other factors identified by the groups. To evaluate each of these factors, sample messages in different sizes, shapes, with/without attribution, with/without icons, and with/ without specialized borders were developed so that the moderator (or participants) could demonstrate placement of the brief statements in various configurations.

Participants were presented with sample brief statements in three sizes. The "large" messages were 25 percent of the total height of the ads used as samples for the groups. The statements identified as "medium" sized were 15 percent of the total height, and the "small" versions were 8 percent of the total height, which is the approximate size of the Surgeon General's warning.

E. Summary of Preferences

Each group summarized its preferences for the messages that participants preferred and the placement and design elements that would be most effective in drawing the attention of adolescents to the dangers of smoking. Participants also used this occasion to make other recommendations that might make the messages more effective.

## General Findings

I. Assumptions and Basic Perception of Adolescent Smoking

1. All of the groups indicated that a high percentage of adolescents will try cigarette smoking at some point during their teenage years. Estimates of the number of teens who will try smoking ranged from 50 to 99 percent. The major reasons given for why teens try smoking included: peer pressure; doing something that adults would not approve of; the perception of smoking as a "cool" activity; curiosity; and being around parents, other family members and friends who smoke.

"pressure from your friends"

"Ît's kind of like you go out and somebody offers you a cigarette and everybody else has one \* \* \*."

"It's more they're being rebels."

"Some people, well, you know, like, do it to be cool."

"Lots of people, most of the kids I know, my friends, their, like, their brothers and sisters give them a cigarette, saying, 'You want to try it yet?""

2. The adolescents in our groups indicated that teens attach little stigma to smoking because it is seen as an exploratory behavior rather than as a permanent lifestyle choice. Smoking appears to be not a lifestyle choice, but rather a matter of "trying it out," "exploring what it is like," and an informational pre-decisional behavior.

"\* \* \* you know, other people are doing it, so why not try it?"

"At the beginning, it would be like just curiosity and wanting to know what it's like."

3. When asked where they get cigarettes, the adolescents in these groups indicated that they get them from family or friends who smoke; they buy them at convenience stores or other retail outlets known for allowing minors to purchase cigarettes; or they steal them.

"Well, I'm speaking from experience because when I was growing up my brother would buy them for me."

"You just go up to the counter, and even if you don't have any ID, you can still get them."

4. Teens that are just trying smoking stated very different reasons for smoking than teens who regularly smoke. The teens in these focus groups said that people try smoking to feel cool; to experience something that they consider to be "adult" behavior; and because of social pressures to try smoking in group situations. In contrast, the participants who identified themselves as smokers said that they smoked because it calms them down, or because smoking satisfies a physical and mental need. They indicated that they do not smoke in groups, nor do they smoke for social acceptance, but rather to meet bodily needs.

"It's like, oh, I smoke but I just do it after school. Have a cigarette to calm down or something."

"I used to be real jittery and nervous all the time, and it really calms me down."

"Your body craves it. You don't think about it anymore. It just becomes part of your life, just to have a cigarette."

5. Some of the practiced smokers in the groups expressed a very fatalistic attitude about their lives, and they questioned the likelihood of whether they would live a long time.

"They're going to die anyway. At least they're doing something they want to do."

6. Non-smokers in these groups were often critical of people who smoke regularly as adults, calling the behavior "stupid" or "unhealthy." However, their criticism often was tempered by the fact that they know family members, relatives or other respected adults who are or have been longtime smokers.

"People smoke because they're putting lots of nicotine in their blood and killing themselves."

"I mean, it's like suicide, you know?"

## II. Perceptions of Cigarette Advertising

1. The adolescent participants in the focus groups were very familiar with cigarette advertising. There was 100% recognition of familiar ads, such as Camel, Marlboro, Virginia Slims, and Newport ads. There also was high awareness of the availability of promotional items with cigarette logos on them, such as T-shirts, book bags, etc. Participants explained how one could accumulate "Marlboro Miles" or "Camel C Dollars" to acquire such items.

"Yeah, you get, like, at certain brands you get points for them and you can turn them points in for, like, Zippo lighters or jackets and bags."