

## MORE INFO ON PHILIP MORRIS'S EXTERNAL RESEARCH PROGRAM

We have found out more information on Philip Morris's External Research Program by calling up some of the peer reviewers themselves, searching internal Philip Morris documents, and talking with people who monitor the tobacco industry's influence on scientific research. You may find this information useful to draw upon when writing letters to people on the list of peer reviewers. Here's a quick summary:

1. The "new" program is actually not new at all.

PM's External Research Program is simply a reincarnation of the PM-controlled Center for Indoor Air Research (CIAR) which funded dozens of researchers over the past decade -- many of whom are now serving as peer reviewers. The address is the same, the director is the same, and PM's control over the research is the same.

2. One of the program's main goals is to thwart efforts to eliminate smoking in public places.

Tobacco industry documents\* prove that PM used CIAR to divert attention away from the dangers of secondhand smoke -- and that the industry now plans to export their successful strategy around the world. A sampling of research areas that PM plans to fund through it's "new" external research program: the role of genetic factors in the production of airway inflammation and airway remodeling, susceptibility to microorganisms, and host susceptibility factors in the etiology of lung disease due to environmental inhalation exposures. In other words, it's your genes, bugs, and dust that gave you cancer...not necessarily cigarette smoke. \* *For links to relevant industry documents go to <http://www.essentialaction.org/tobacco/action/pmpr/links.pdf>*

3. Many peer reviewers have a longstanding relationship with PM.

Over half of the people on the list of peer reviewers have received funding from CIAR in the past decade. Grants were often in the range of several \$100,000. Many have also served as peer reviewers for CIAR. While some of these scientists may be naive about how their names and the names of their institutions are being used to legitimize Philip Morris and its agenda, others have clearly been "bought."

4. Many peer reviewers also work closely with organizations interested in tobacco control.

Six people work for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (including Mary Jane Selgrade, listed as a consultant, who is the branch chief of Immunotoxicology). Two work with the National Institute of Health. And many more have worked with, consulted for, or been funded by, these government bodies. A significant number of people on the list are members of the American Thoracic Society, which has a close relationship with the American Lung Association. The recruitment of researchers with ties to respected organizations and institutions is a calculated strategy of Philip Morris for heightening the credibility of their research program and company.

## GENERAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION

For years the tobacco industry has sought to link itself with people and organizations that might legitimize the industry and add credibility to its PR campaigns. Doctors and researchers from the public health community have, for obvious reasons, been of particular value. There are many excellent reasons why those who care about public health should not accept money from or associate themselves with the industry under any circumstances:

1) LEGITIMIZATION OF INDUSTRY. In associating with the industry, even in a limited capacity, one lends one's name and that of one's institution to the industry to be used and abused at will. The mere association helps the industry overcome its gigantic public relations problems.

2) BIASED OPINIONS & RESULTS. No business-minded corporation knowingly funds research that would hurt its operations. If the industry decides to fund a university research project, one might logically question the efficacy of the expected results in furthering the cause of tobacco control. Researchers may genuinely believe their research is objective, but the industry will only sponsor it if they believe it will advance their long-term interests. Tobacco industry-sponsored has been shown statistically to be more favorable to industry positions than non-industry sponsored research.

3) WASTE OF TIME & MONEY. One of the industry's key strategies has been to keep the notion of controversy about tobacco-related disease alive, despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary. Is smoking really the culprit? What about applesauce? Another strategy has been to focus energies on less effective tobacco control strategies, like installing air ventilation systems rather than banning smoking in public places.

As more and more governments around the world consider implementing tougher tobacco control legislation, Philip Morris has made it a prerogative to persuade them otherwise. The company is likely to quote its peer-reviewed research in making a seemingly "sound science"-based case against any tobacco control regulations that it knows, internally, to be effective in reducing smoking rates.

It is possible that many of the people who have agreed to act as peer reviewers for Philip Morris do not fully understand the politics surrounding tobacco control and research. Perhaps they are naive in thinking the industry has really changed and become more responsible. Whatever the reason for their involvement with Philip Morris, we should give them the benefit of the doubt and assume that they are genuinely unaware of the larger implications of their association with the corporation.

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