VMS Resolution

Reducing the Secondary Effects of Cigarettes

Adopted at 191st VMS Annual Meeting, October 23, 2004

Whereas, secondhand smoke is more than an annoyance, it is a killer. Secondhand smoke is the third leading cause of preventable death and kills 53,000 non-smokers in the U.S. each year. It causes cancer, heart disease, strokes and many other illnesses. Secondhand smoke also exacerbates other medical conditions such as asthma, emphysema, heart failure and anemia; and

Whereas, in 1993 the Vermont Legislature enacted the Clean Indoor Air Act which prohibits smoking in most public places. However, the Act includes an exemption for restaurants and bars that receive more than 50% of their revenues from alcohol sales and entertainment – the "Cabaret exemption"; and

Whereas, bartenders working an 8-hour shift inhale the equivalent of ½ pack of cigarettes. They face a 50% greater risk of dying of lung cancer, heart disease and other illnesses than other workers. Waitressing is the most hazardous occupation for women - compared to other female workers, waitresses are almost four times more likely to die from lung cancer; and

Whereas, eliminating the Cabaret exemption in Vermont will save lives by protecting workers and patrons who are both smokers and non-smokers alike from the harmful effects of secondhand smoke.

Whereas, cigarettes are also the leading cause of fatal home fires in the United States. Annually, between 900 and 1,000 people in the United States die from fires started by cigarettes and an additional 2,500 to 3,000 are injured. More than 100 victims who die every year are children and nonsmokers. The cost of human life and property damage exceeds $6 billion every year; and

Whereas, fire-safe cigarettes have significantly less propensity to ignite furniture or mattresses when carelessly discarded. Small design changes including use of less dense tobacco, less porous paper, a smaller diameter, filter tip, and no added citrates to the paper are key components of a fire-safe cigarette; and

Whereas, in June, 2004 New York became the first state to require that all cigarettes sold in-state are self-extinguishing and companies including Reynolds Tobacco, Philip Morris, and Lorillard are selling fire-safe paper cigarettes in New York; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Vermont Medical Society:

Endorses strengthening the 1993 Clean Indoor Air Act by eliminating the Cabaret License Exemption which allows smoking in bars and restaurants;
Supports the Cigarette Fire Safety Act of 2004 (HR 4155), that would require the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) adopt the New York state cigarette fire safety standard as the national standard; and

Will collaborate with representatives of public safety, insurance companies, legislators, and others to require fire-safe cigarettes in Vermont.