Fact Sheet: Tobacco Industry Sponsorship

Tobacco Use Stats
- Tobacco use begins young: 88% of adults who have ever smoked tried their first cigarette by the age of 18; the average age at which smokers try their first cigarette is 14.5 years.1
- Nationally, more than 48,500,000 are currently smokers.3
- In New York State:
  - 6.7% of middle school children smoke (Middle school males=7.2%, Middle school females=5.6%)4
  - 21.3% of high school students smoke (High school males=21%, high school females=21.6%)5
  - 23.3% of people over 18 smoke (Males=25.8%, females=19.2%)6
- Tobacco Companies spend more than $11.22 billion in marketing their products each year.7

Health Effects of Tobacco Use
- 440,000 people die from tobacco-related illnesses every year, making it the leading cause of preventable death in the United States;8 and
- Scientific studies have concluded that cigarette smoking can cause chronic lung disease, coronary heart disease, and stroke, in addition to cancer of the lungs, larynx, esophagus, mouth, and bladder;9 and
- Each year, secondhand smoke kills an estimated 62,000 nonsmokers, including approximately 3,000 deaths due to lung cancer and 35,000 deaths due to heart disease among nonsmokers each year in the United States.10

The Impact of Tobacco Industry Sponsorship

Sponsorship markets tobacco brands to kids.
- “A considerable body of research suggests that tobacco sports sponsorship may influence youth smoking attitudes and behavior. This research has found that cigarette sports sponsorship has profound affects on brand awareness, perceived connections between brands and sport, associations between cigarette sports sponsorship and excitement, attitudes about smoking, and smoking behavior.”11
- The majority of studies regarding tobacco sponsorship agree that its effects on children are similar to those of traditional tobacco product advertisement and promotion12; about 1/3 of adolescent experimentation with smoking results directly from tobacco advertising and promotion.13
- Tobacco industry sponsored events are typically home to tobacco brand promotional activity. Research shows that children who participate in promotional activities are over 9 times more likely to smoke than other children.14

And they don’t have to be at the event to be affected.
- Even complying with the Master Settlement Agreement’s restrictions on event sponsorship and marketing to kids, tobacco companies will be able to achieve 25 hours of television exposure, an equivalent of $99.1 million in television advertising value, per year through sponsorship of sporting events or teams.15
- A study in the UK revealed that about 1/3 of 10- and 11-year-olds and more than half of children 12 and older could name cigarette brands and their associated sponsored sports.16

Tobacco Industry Quotes
- “Music is the second of our targeted promotional themes and Marlboro is involved in a big way.... The real benefit of the concept is the quality of the personal contact which ensures that Marlboro and music are firmly linked in our target group’s mind.” Philip Morris, 1990
- “We are in the cigarette business. We are not in the sports business. We use sports as an avenue for advertising our product.” RJ Reynolds Tobacco Company

2Ibid.
5Ibid.
17Ibid.
18Altman, David G., 1996.