



January 17, 2008

John R. Nelson
President
Operations and Technology
Philip Morris
PO Box 26603
Richmond, VA 23261

Dear Mr. Nelson,

Thank you for your letter regarding the health consequences of tobacco use.

As the nation's acting Surgeon General, my responsibility is to ensure that Americans are getting the best science-based information to make decisions about their health. This is particularly true in the case of tobacco related death and disease.

Tobacco use is the leading preventable cause of death in the United States. Each year, an estimated 438,000 Americans die from tobacco use. Additionally, for every person who dies from tobacco use, 20 more people (8.6 million in total) suffer from at least one serious tobacco-related illness. Coupled with this enormous health toll is the significant economic burden of tobacco use: more than \$96 billion per year in medical expenditures and another \$97 billion per year resulting from lost productivity.

The Office of the Surgeon General is committed to safeguarding the health of the American people. My message encourages young people to avoid the use of any tobacco product. This message is based on the best science, which promotes the health and wellness of the American people.

Thank you again for your letter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "S. Galson", written over a horizontal line.

Steven K. Galson, M.D., M.P.H.
RADM, USPHS
Acting Surgeon General of the United States