



AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR RESPIRATORY CARE

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August 3, 2016

Mr. Robert A. Iger
Chief Executive Officer
The Walt Disney Company
500 South Buena Vista Street
Burbank, CA 91521-4873

Dear Mr. Iger:

On behalf of the American Association for Respiratory Care (AARC), I am writing to express our strong disappointment and concern over recent media reports highlighting the fact that The Walt Disney Company (Disney) owns a major stake in VICE Media, which we understand is helping Philip Morris International, maker of Marlboro cigarettes, market its deadly cigarettes to young people around the world. Disney should tell VICE to end its relationship with the tobacco industry immediately.

The AARC is a national professional organization with a membership of 50,000 respiratory therapists who treat patients with chronic respiratory diseases such as asthma and Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) and whose organizational activities impact over 170,000 practicing respiratory therapists across the country. By virtue of their education and health care experience, respiratory therapists are professionals who have a clear understanding of the nature of cardiopulmonary disease and are in a position to act as advocates for healthy hearts and lungs. These highly trained professionals see every day the damaging effects to the health of their respiratory patients caused by use of tobacco products.

It is highly irresponsible for VICE to use its expertise in youth marketing to help one of the world's largest tobacco companies sell more of its deadly products. Disney should not be associated with companies that act in a socially irresponsible manner and contribute to the global tobacco epidemic, which kills six million people each year.

Tobacco use remains the leading preventable cause of death in the United States and COPD is almost always caused by smoking, according to the National, Heart, Blood and Lung Institute. The

Centers for Disease Prevention and Control lists COPD as the third leading cause of death. We need to stop young people from being lured into smoking through savvy advertising and marketing by tobacco giants like Philip Morris. The fact that Disney is associated with a company that assists big tobacco in doing just that goes against everything we have come to know the Disney Corporation stands for.

The AARC is an advocate for both tobacco cessation and tobacco prevention programs. As a responsibility to the public, we have taken a strong position against cigarette smoking and the use of tobacco in any form, including the inhalation of any toxic substance. Further, the AARC has developed a specific position statement on e-cigarettes as follows:

“In line with its mission as a patient advocate and in order to endure patient safety, the American Association for Respiratory Care (AARC) opposes the use of the electronic cigarette (e-cigarette). Even though the concept of using the e-cigarette for smoking cessation is attractive, they have not been fully studied and the use among middle school children is increasing year after year. There is no evidence as to the amount of nicotine or other potentially harmful chemicals being inhaled during use or if there are any benefits associated with using these products.”

The AARC is also one of many like-minded organizations that comprise the Tobacco Partners Coalition led by the American Cancer Society’s Cancer Action Network, the American Heart Association, the American Lung Association, the Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids and Partners for Effective Tobacco Policy. For the sake of America’s youth and the sake of Disney’s reputation, we strongly urge you to tell VICE to end this harmful relationship now.

Sincerely,



Frank R. Salvatore, RRT, MBA, FAARC
President

Cc:

Disney, Global Communications [via email]

Disney, Corporate Responsibility [via email]

Zenia Mucha, Executive Vice President and Chief Communications Officer [via email]

Aaron Frank, Director of Corporate Citizenship [via email]