



## **August 10, 2000 - SLS Announces \$52 Million Expansion**

(CHICAGO, IL – August 10, 2000) The SmokeLess States National Tobacco Prevention and Control Program of the American Medical Association (AMA) today announced that it will expand by \$52 million in September, more than doubling its current size. Funded by The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation of Princeton, New Jersey, the expansion will pave the way for all states to be eligible to participate in the tobacco prevention efforts of the SmokeLess States program. SmokeLess States, which funds 27 statewide coalitions and two cities, is a national, private sector initiative whose purpose is to reduce or prevent the use of tobacco especially among children and teenagers.

"We are extremely pleased with the news of this expansion," said Thomas P. Houston, MD, director of the SmokeLess States program. "With this additional funding, we will be able to broaden our tobacco prevention efforts – especially among our nation's children and teenagers – for they have been, and they continue to be prime targets of a multi-billion dollar industry that stays in business by addicting our young."

"We are grateful that The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation is helping us to significantly expand the efforts of the SmokeLess States program," said Randolph D. Smoak, Jr., MD, president of the AMA. "SmokeLess States has a proven track record of reducing the use of tobacco among children and adolescents. It has helped prevent many of our nation's young from becoming future victims of the tobacco epidemic." A Call for Proposals for the expanded program will be issued in the fall. At that time, more detailed funding information will be provided. Funds will be disbursed to one entity per state which will serve to bring advocates together to set their priorities and agendas for their local and statewide tobacco prevention and control efforts.

With 29 grantees, SmokeLess States is the largest non-government-funded national effort in tobacco prevention and control, and the third largest nationwide tobacco prevention program behind the Federal government and the American Legacy Foundation in Washington, D.C. The SmokeLess States grantees concentrate their efforts in three areas: 1) promoting public awareness of the dangers of tobacco use; 2) educating the public regarding policy options related to tobacco; and 3) enhancing prevention and treatment programs. The work is carried out through statewide coalitions.

States with coalitions that are currently affiliated with the SmokeLess States program include: Alaska, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Maryland, Minnesota, Nebraska, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, and Wisconsin. Washington, D. C. and Tucson, Arizona are citywide programs within SmokeLess States.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, about 3,000 children begin smoking each day and statistics show one-third of them will die from it. Tobacco use is the single most

preventable cause of death and disease in the United States. Annually, it causes 430,000 deaths and costs the nation approximately \$50-73 billion in medical expenses alone.

For more information please contact SmokeLess States at 312-464-5547.