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American Lung Association Opposes Ruling to Block Implementation of Cigarette Graphic Warning Labels

Statement of Charles D Connor, President and CEO of the American Lung Association

WASHINGTON– The American Lung Association strongly disagrees with today's ruling by U.S. District Court Judge Richard Leon that blocks the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) from moving forward with the implementation of graphic warning labels on all cigarette packages and advertisements, set to take effect during the fall of 2012. The American Lung Association calls on the Justice Department to immediately appeal this decision and to protect public health by preserving the FDA's authority to regulate tobacco products, as required in the Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act.

This ruling presents a direct and immediate threat to public health. The tobacco industry's efforts to halt the replacement of cigarette warning labels that are 25 years-old, ineffective and hidden on the side of packages, will result in more lives lost to tobacco.

The new graphic warning label regulation was the result of a very thorough and comprehensive scientific evaluation conducted by the FDA. While the graphic images displayed on the new warning labels may be disturbing to some, the World Health Organization has concluded that "health warnings on tobacco packages increase smokers' awareness of their risk. Use of pictures with graphic depictions of disease and other negative images has greater impact than words alone." Studies have also found graphic images to be effective at deterring children from smoking – the tobacco industry's prime target when seeking new customers for their addictive product.

The American Lung Association and its public health partners filed this amicus brief in September 2011.

(<http://www.lungusa.org/get-involved/advocate/advocacy-documents/amicus-curiae-brief-re-rj.pdf>)

The American Lung Association has been successfully helping smokers quit for more than 30 years with its Freedom From Smoking® program, which provides a personalized step-by-step quit plan and is available as a face-to-face program or online (www.ffsonline.org). For assistance with quitting smoking or for additional questions about lung health, please call the American Lung Association's Lung HelpLine at 1-800-548-8252.

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About the American Lung Association

Now in its second century, the American Lung Association is the leading organization working to save lives by improving lung health and preventing lung disease. With your generous support, the American Lung Association is "Fighting for Air" through research, education and advocacy. For more information about the American Lung Association, a Charity Navigator Four Star Charity and holder of the Better Business Bureau Wise Giving Guide Seal, or to support the work it does, call 1-800-LUNG-USA (1-800-586-4872) or visit www.Lung.org.