



Tobacco-Free Onondaga County

421 Montgomery Street, 9th Floor, Syracuse, New York 13202

315.435.3280 • 315.435.3613 Fax

August 1, 2007

Dear Event Coordinator:

Please join us in saying "No Thanks Big Tobacco!" Tobacco use remains the single most preventable cause of death in the United States, accounting for more than 440,000 deaths each year. More deaths are caused each year by tobacco use than by all deaths from HIV/AIDS, illegal drug use, alcohol use, motor vehicle injuries, suicides, and murders combined. Major tobacco companies spend over **\$15 billion each year** (more than \$41 million each day) promoting their deadly product.

Community festivals and events play a critical role in establishing social norms within our community and are leaders in creating community culture. A large number of Tobacco Industry corporate sponsorships involve community events, including cultural and arts festivals, hobby shows, theatres and educational institutions. Tobacco-Free Onondaga County is trying to change social norms about tobacco, so that as a community we let our children know that tobacco is not accepted. Right now, youth get very mixed messages: they receive anti-tobacco education in schools, but they see tobacco promotion everywhere, in retail stores, smoking in movies, etc. We know now that tobacco advertising and promotion is very effective at getting youth to smoke - research shows it **more than doubles the odds that children under 18 will become tobacco users** and is actually more powerful than peer pressure.

You can help stop the Tobacco Industry from reaching our children by signing the attached *Commitment to Public Health*, saying that your facility or event won't knowingly accept tobacco company contributions, advertising or sponsorship. **Let the Tobacco Industry know that your event is not for sale!**

If you sign the commitment, your event or facility will be promoted by Tobacco-Free Onondaga County in our media campaigns and in special events.

Thank you very much for your thoughtful consideration. If your organization agrees, please sign the attached *Commitment to Public Health* and send a copy to me by mail at Tobacco-Free Onondaga County, 421 Montgomery Street, 9th floor, Syracuse NY 13202 or by fax to (315) 435-3613. Please contact me at (315) 435-3280 or hkwill@ongov.net if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Kara Williams
Tobacco-Free Onondaga County