



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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Monday, March 19, 2007

**STATEMENT BY  
Rear Admiral Kenneth Moritsugu  
Acting Surgeon General  
Regarding the Death of Peter Van Vechten Hamill, medical director for the 1964 U.S. Surgeon  
General's smoking report**

The public health community has suffered a great loss in the passing of Peter Van Vechten Hamill, medical director for the 1964 U.S. Surgeon General's Report on Smoking and Health.

At the request of then Surgeon General Luther Terry, M.D., Dr. Hamill formed the advisory committee that produced the first official government report that linked smoking to cancer. After that report, it was known that smoking was a definite cause of a few serious diseases; today we know that smoking causes diseases in nearly every organ of the body.

The successes resulting from the report have few parallels in the history of public health. Since the advisory committee's report, adult smoking rates have been cut in half between 1965 and 2005 and the per capita consumption of tobacco products has fallen by more than half. Today, there are more people who have quit smoking than who still smoke. However, the battle is not over. Statistics indicate that more than 12 million Americans have died from smoking since the 1964 report, and another 25 million Americans alive today will most likely die of a smoking-related illness.

It is important to continue the work that Dr. Hamill and the advisory committee started with this landmark report by supporting continued research as well as successful state and community programs to reduce tobacco use.

Dr. Hamill was an outstanding leader and a great American, and I extend my sincere condolences to his family.

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