American Cancer Society Applauds CVS Caremark's Decision to Halt the Sale of Tobacco Products in its Stores

February 5 Statement from John R. Seffrin, Ph.D., CEO of the American Cancer Society

The American Cancer Society congratulates CVS Caremark on its decision to stop the sale of tobacco products in all of its stores. This move is an important new development in the fight to save lives from the devastating effects of tobacco use.

The landmark 1964 U.S. Surgeon General's Report on Smoking and Health marked the beginning of a national, and now global, effort to end the tobacco epidemic. Society-funded research, public education campaigns, and advocacy efforts over more than 50 years have helped reduce the smoking rate by more than half, from 42 percent in 1964 to 18 percent today, and saved more than 8 million lives from tobacco.

But there's a lot more to do. More than 43 million people in America still smoke and tobacco will cause an estimated 480,000 deaths this year in the U.S. If smoking persists at its current rate among young adults in this country, 5.6 million Americans younger than 18 years old alive today will die prematurely from a smoking-related illness.

We know that policies that restrict access to tobacco products, reduce exposure to tobacco advertising, and limit the places that people smoke have a direct effect on reduced smoking rates, especially among youth. And that's what makes this move so significant: community pharmacists play a key role in health and wellness and CVS Caremark has taken a bold step to demonstrate its commitment to healthy lifestyles and the prevention of disease.

We applaud CVS Caremark for its leadership and strongly encourage other industry leaders to follow suit.

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About the American Cancer Society

The American Cancer Society is a global grassroots force of more than three million volunteers saving lives and fighting for every birthday threatened by every cancer in every community. As the largest voluntary health organization, the Society's efforts have contributed to a 20 percent decline in cancer death rates in the U.S. since 1991, and a 50 percent drop in smoking rates. Thanks in part to our progress nearly 14 million Americans who have had cancer and countless more who have avoided it will celebrate more birthdays this year. As we mark our 100th birthday in 2013, we're determined to finish the fight against cancer. We're finding cures as the nation's largest private, not-for-profit investor in cancer research, ensuring people facing cancer have the help they need and continuing the fight for access to quality health care, lifesaving screenings, clean air, and more. For more information, to get help, or to join the fight, call us anytime, day or night, at 1-800-227-2345 or visit www.cancer.org/fight .