

NOTED

- Woonsocket, RI-based **CVS Caremark** said that it will discontinue sales of tobacco products at its more than 7,600 CVS/pharmacy stores across the country by **October 1**, making the company the first national pharmacy chain to take this step in support of the health of its customers. “Put simply, the sale of tobacco products is inconsistent with our purpose,” said Larry Merlo, president and CEO of CVS Caremark. The move is expected to cost the company \$2 billion in sales annually.
- **The \$1,000 human genome sequence is now a reality**, according to San Diego, CA-based Illumina, Inc., making mass sequencing possible. The company’s CEO, Jay Flatley, introduced its HiSeq X sequencer, designed to process 20,000 genomes a year at a cost of \$1,000 each, at the JP Morgan Chase & Co. health care conference in San Francisco, CA.
- **Between 2005 and 2009, lung cancer incidence rates have dropped by 2.6% per year among men and 1.1% per year among women**, according to a report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Among adults ages 35 to 44, the drop in incidence rates was even greater—6.5% per year among men and 5.8% per year among women. In all age groups, lung cancer incidence rates dropped more quickly among men than among women.
- **Mylan Pharmaceuticals began marketing Hertraz (trastuzumab) in India.** The drug is the world’s first biosimilar to Herceptin (Roche/Genentech).
- Due to insufficient enrollment, **Aveo Oncology and Astellas Pharma have decided to discontinue a phase II trial of tivozanib in patients with locally recurrent or metastatic triple-negative breast cancer.**
- In a study in the *Annals of Oncology*, researchers conclude that **Europe may not have enough medical oncologists to keep pace with the rising toll of cancer** (*Ann Oncol* 2014;25:525–8). The report shows that 12 countries, mostly in Western Europe, will probably have enough medical oncologists over the next 8 years, but researchers were not able to gather sufficient information from 15 other European Union members to assess their needs.



U.S. Surgeon General Luther Terry, MD (standing), summarizes the findings of the report *Smoking and Health* at a 1964 press conference. It was the first American report to conclude that smoking causes lung cancer and chronic bronchitis.

smoke are also at increased risk for second cancers caused by smoking—especially lung cancer, for which the risk is up to 24 times greater in current smokers compared with never smokers.

That information isn’t new to most oncologists, says Benjamin Toll, PhD, director of the smoking cessation program at Yale Cancer Center and associate professor of psychiatry at Yale School of Medicine in New Haven, CT. What they may not be aware of are the strong data

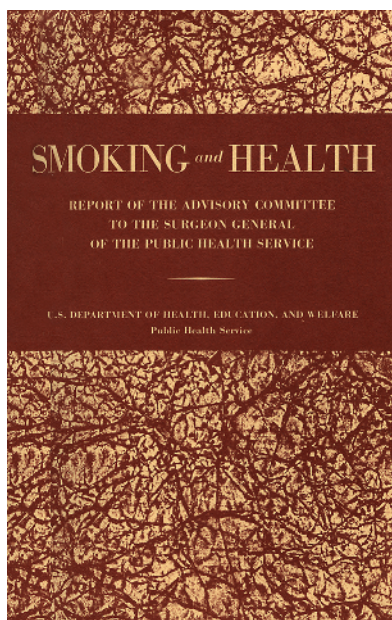
showing that radiation therapy does not work as well for current smokers.

“If you’re a radiation oncologist, it’s really important to strongly encourage your patients who smoke to quit,” says Toll, adding that research shows smoking can hamper surgery and chemotherapy outcomes as well. Smoking may also increase the risk for treatment-related toxicities, according to the Surgeon General’s report.

Yet, it is not routine for oncologists to discuss these risks with patients who smoke, says Toll, who helped review the report’s chapter on cancer. Toll hopes evidence from the 472 prospective studies summarized in the adverse health outcomes section prompts more oncologists to pay attention to their patients’ tobacco use.

Many cancer patients stand to benefit from cessation assistance, considering more than a third of cancer patients continue to smoke after diagnosis. For cancer patients who quit at diagnosis, the report suggests the risk of dying could drop by 30% to 40%.

Even so, few prospective studies have assessed the impact of smoking cessation at diagnosis compared to remaining a smoker, says Toll, noting that most of the research done so far has looked only at how continued smoking adversely affects cancer patients. “Rigorous studies are still needed to determine whether quitting smoking before treatment leads to a better outcome.” ■



In January, Acting Surgeon General Boris Lushniak, MD, MPH, released *The Health Consequences of Smoking—50 Years of Progress*, which commemorates the 50th anniversary of 1964’s *Smoking and Health* (above).

For more news on cancer research, visit *Cancer Discovery* online at <http://CDnews.aacrjournals.org>.