



April 8, 2011

Michael Weiner, Executive Director
Major League Baseball Players Association
12 East 49th Street, 24th Floor
New York, NY 10017

Dear Mr. Weiner:

There have been a number of developments since we last corresponded about the use of smokeless tobacco on the playing field and in the dugout at Major League games. Since that time, 15 top health officials from Major League Baseball (MLB) cities wrote to you and Commissioner Selig, urging MLB to prohibit smokeless tobacco. There has also been growing support voiced in the media and from many others concerned about both the health of major leaguers and our nation's children.

Last week Commissioner Selig responded that he supports the prohibition of smokeless tobacco use at MLB games and said that in the current round of collective bargaining, MLB will propose restrictions on its use that are "comparable to the restrictions in place at the Minor League level" —that is, a prohibition.

We appreciate the Commissioner's commitment to work with you to prohibit smokeless tobacco use to protect players' well-being and set a healthy example for millions of young fans. We were also heartened by your own public statements during spring training that this important issue will indeed be on the table during the contract talks.

We ask the Major League Baseball Players Association to make the same commitment made by Commissioner Selig. This should not be an issue of contention between players and owners. What we are asking is in the interest of the health of current players, future ballplayers and countless youth who imitate their baseball heroes.

Some have argued that no action should be taken because tobacco is a legal substance that adults use by choice. However, MLB already prohibits smoking by uniformed personnel in view of spectators, even though adults can legally smoke cigarettes and cigars. In addition, Major League players are not allowed to drink alcohol on the field, and many teams have banned alcohol in the clubhouse. The same rationale behind these rules applies to the use of smokeless tobacco.

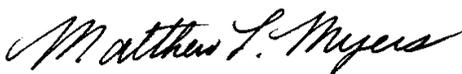
In light of the serious health risks from smokeless tobacco—it causes oral cancer and has been linked to heart disease and pancreatic cancer—players should be encouraged to quit, and be given support to help them do so. We and the many public health leaders who support this effort stand ready to assist ballplayers who want to quit.

Because tobacco sickens and kills those who use it, the tobacco industry relies on replacing its customers with new, young users. That is why so much tobacco marketing, including the marketing of smokeless products, is aimed at youth. With the industry spending record sums on marketing smokeless products, the use of smokeless tobacco by high school boys has skyrocketed by 36 percent since 2003. Baseball should no longer be indirectly aiding this promotion.

Last week, MLB and the players union announced a new joint policy on concussions. This far-reaching plan to protect players, umpires and others who might sustain concussions during play demonstrates that you can act decisively and without public contention on issues affecting the health of those in the game. We ask that you apply the same judgment to the issue of smokeless tobacco use.

We would like to schedule a meeting with you and members of the public health community to discuss this critical issue and how we could work together toward a smokeless tobacco prohibition that would be in the best interests of baseball, the players and the millions of young people who watch their idols. Our point of contact for this request is Matthew Myers, President of the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, who can be reached at 202-296-5469 or mmyers@tobaccofreekids.org.

Sincerely,



Matthew L. Myers
President
Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids



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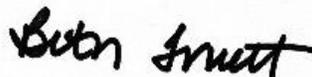
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