STATEMENT OF

C. EVERETT KOOP, M.D.

SURGEON GENERAL

PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

BEFORE

PRESS CONFERENCE

WITH

SENATOR BRADLEY AND DR. MARS

THE CAPITOL

ON

BRADLEY'S BILL FOR A LABEL ON CIGARETTE PACKAGES

AND ADVERTISING CONCERNING ADDICTION

SEPTEMBER 15, 1988

I AM PLEASED TO APPEAR BEFORE YOU TODAY TO DISCUSS NOT THIS LEGISLATION BUT THE HEALTH CONSIDERATIONS OF NICOTINE ADDICTION.

IN MAY, I RELEASED THE REPORT OF THE SURGEON GENERAL, THE HEALTH CONSEQUENCES OF SMOKING: NICOTINE ADDICTION. THIS REPORT IS AN EXAMINATION OF THE ADDICTIVE NATURE OF SMOKING BEHAVIOR. THE REPORT REPRESENTS A COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF OVER 2,000 SCIENTIFIC ARTICLES BY EXPERTS IN THE FIELD OF SMOKING AND ADDICTION. THE REPORT REPRESENTS THE WORK OF MORE THAN 50 SCIENTISTS FROM A VARIETY OF DISCIPLINES, FROM THIS COUNTRY AND ABROAD.

THERE ARE THREE OVERALL CONCLUSIONS OF THE REPORT, WHICH ARE:

FIRST: CIGARETTES AND OTHER FORMS OF TOBACCO ARE ADDICTING.

SECOND: NICOTINE IS THE DRUG IN TOBACCO THAT CAUSES ADDICTION.

THIRD: THE PHARMACOLOGIC AND BEHAVIORAL PROCESSES THAT DETERMINE TOBACCO ADDICTION ARE SIMILAR TO THOSE THAT DETERMINE ADDICTION TO DRUGS SUCH AS HEROIN AND COCAINE.

WE, AS A SOCIETY, NEED TO INCREASE OUR EFFORTS TO DISCOURAGE TOBACCO USE, ESPECIALLY SINCE WE NOW RECOGNIZE NICOTINE AS AN ADDICTING DRUG. WE SHOULD USE EVERY AVAILABLE MEANS TO ADVISE OUR CITIZENS ABOUT THE SERIOUS NATURE OF TOBACCO ADDICTION.

PUBLIC INFORMATION CAMPAIGNS SHOULD BE DEVELOPED TO INCREASE COMMUNITY AWARENESS OF THE ADDICTIVE NATURE OF TOBACCO USE. A HEALTH WARNING ON ADDICTION SHOULD BE ROTATED WITH THE OTHER WARNINGS NOW REQUIRED ON CIGARETTE AND SMOKELESS TOBACCO PACKAGES AND ADVERTISEMENTS. PREVENTION OF TOBACCO USE SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL HEALTH EDUCATION CURRICULA. MANY CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS WHO ARE EXPERIMENTING WITH CIGARETTES AND OTHER FORMS OF TOBACCO STATE THAT THEY DO NOT INTEND TO USE TOBACCO IN LATER YEARS. THEY ARE UNAWARE OF, OR UNDERESTIMATE, THE STRENGTH OF TOBACCO ADDICTION. BECAUSE THIS ADDICTION ALMOST ALWAYS BEGINS DURING CHILDHOOD OR ADOLESCENCE, CHILDREN NEED TO BE WARNED AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE, AND REPEATEDLY WARNED THROUGH THEIR TEENAGE YEARS, ABOUT THE DANGERS OF EXPOSING THEMSELVES TO NICOTINE.

SMOKING IS RESPONSIBLE FOR WELL OVER 300,000 DEATHS ANNUALLY IN THE UNITED STATES, WHICH REPRESENTS APPROXIMATELY 16 PERCENT OF ALL DEATHS. THIS NATION HAS MOBILIZED ENORMOUS RESOURCES TO WAGE A WAR ON DRUGS -- ILLICIT DRUGS. WE SHOULD ALSO GIVE PRIORITY TO THE ONE ADDICTION THAT IS KILLING MORE AMERICANS EACH YEAR THAN ANY OTHER SINGLE CAUSE.