

## **World Cancer Campaign Builds Momentum Globally with International Initiative to Protect Children from Secondhand Smoke**

### **The Lance Armstrong Foundation joins first global effort focusing on dangers of parental smoking in homes and cars**

**AUSTIN, Texas** – February 4, 2008 – In the first global initiative of its kind, the Lance Armstrong Foundation (LAF) and the International Union Against Cancer (UICC), a global consortium of cancer-fighting organizations, will lead a year-long communication, education and advocacy effort to promote smoke-free environments for children. "I love my smoke-free childhood" will launch today, World Cancer Day. The campaign will encourage parents to avoid smoking at home or in a car; avoid smoking while pregnant or in the vicinity of someone who is pregnant; use a smoke-free daycare; and avoid smoking altogether. The initiative will also incite parents to caution their children to stay away from second-hand smoke and places that allow smoking and teach them that there is no safe level of second-hand smoke.

"There is no safe level of exposure to secondhand smoke and brief exposure can be harmful. This is the driving message of the initiative," says Claire Neal, the LAF's director of education and program development. "Working together, we will advance awareness of the health risks of secondhand smoke to children and contribute to a healthier society for generations to come."

"I love my smoke-free childhood" marks the first full-year focus on a cancer-prevention habit endorsed by the World Cancer Campaign, a five-year movement launched globally on World Cancer Day 2007. The Campaign spreads knowledge about how parents can prevent cancer in their children later in life by learning about vaccines for virus-related liver and cervical cancers; providing them with a smoke-free environment; protecting them from over-exposure to the sun; and encouraging them to be physically active and eat a healthy diet in order to avoid obesity.

"Forty percent of cancers are preventable through healthy habits," says Isabel Mortara, UICC executive director. "The first step toward prevention is education, starting with parents and children. Every success story means fewer lives lost. Tobacco-related cancers lead the list of preventable deaths and hundreds of thousands of people who have never smoked die each year from diseases caused by breathing secondhand smoke. This is why this initiative is so important."

Tobacco causes one in five of all cancer cases worldwide and one in three in high-income countries. Tobacco killed more than five million people across the world in 2005. If current trends continue, by 2030 tobacco will kill as many as 8.3 million people worldwide each year, including 2.2 million cancer deaths. In the U.S. alone, more than 400,000 people die a tobacco-related death every year. An effective global initiative is needed to cut tobacco use and save lives, starting with healthy behaviors in youth.

In addition to targeting individuals, the World Cancer Campaign encourages decision makers to put cancer on the public agenda. Public policy influences tobacco usage and ultimately childrens' exposure to smoke.

Several countries have passed 100 percent smoke-free laws, banning smoking in all enclosed public places without exception. Ireland was the first to do so in 2004, followed by the United Kingdom, New Zealand, Uruguay, Bermuda and Iran. In the U.S., nearly 63 percent of the population is protected by smoke-free laws in restaurants, bars or the workplace.

"Countries with smoke-free laws should be commended for their legacy to healthier families," says Dr. Franco Cavalli, UICC president. "In these nations with smoke-free laws, the percentage of children exposed to secondhand smoke has clearly decreased over time."

"Cancer control can only be effective if given priority at the highest decision-making levels, and where children are concerned, educating parents about the dangers of second-hand smoke at home is critical to their healthy future," says Lance Armstrong, founder and chairman of the LAF. "We are joining with cancer-fighting organizations in every region— in this the first truly global initiative of its kind."