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Physicians' Group Furious at Cigars in 'Hulk' Movie

By **[BROOKS BARNES](#)**

The [American Medical Association](#) is hulking mad at Marvel Studios.

Last week, the advocacy arm of the powerful physicians' group unleashed a tsk-tsk campaign against "The Incredible Hulk," a [Marvel](#) film that opened on Friday and is distributed by Universal Pictures. The complaint was of "gratuitous depictions of smoking."

In the movie, which drew a PG-13 rating from the [Motion Picture Association of America](#), Gen. Thunderbolt Ross, a bad guy played by [William Hurt](#), is rarely seen without a smoke-spewing cigar. (Presumably, the physicians' association worries that children who identify with the authoritarian general — who wants to annihilate the Hulk, played by [Edward Norton](#) — may be tempted to pick up the habit.)

Dianne Fenyk, president of the advocacy group, A.M.A. Alliance, is particularly infuriated because General Ross did not smoke in "Hulk," the 2003 film directed by [Ang Lee](#), though he always smoked in the comic books. Moreover, the editor of Marvel Comics and the film's star, Mr. Norton, have both previously criticized portrayals of smoking in popular culture, Ms. Fenyk said.

"Hollywood studios should be especially embarrassed for using comic-book movies, which they market to children and know youth will want to see, to promote tobacco," Ms. Fenyk said. She spent last week encouraging her 27,000 members to alert local media about the matter.

Marvel declined to comment. Universal, which has taken pains to position itself as unfriendly to smoking, said that in its advertising materials for the movie, it elected to "prominently place" a parental advisory about the cigar-chomping.

The Motion Picture Association in May 2007 said it would for the first time consider portrayals of smoking alongside sex and violence in assessing the suitability of movies for young viewers. While not addressing "The Incredible Hulk" specifically, Seth Oster, the association's communications chief, defended the effectiveness of the policy.

"The vast majority of films with even a single image of smoking are already rated R or higher," he said.

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