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American Thoracic Society Dismayed by Ruling on Cigarette Warning Labels

The American Thoracic Society is disappointed in today's decision by the U.S. Court of Appeals in Washington, D.C to deny the federal government's request to reconsider an earlier decision blocking a requirement that tobacco companies put large graphic health warnings on cigarette packages.

In August, the court affirmed a lower court ruling blocking the FDA mandate, saying it infringed on First Amendment free speech protections.

"There is ample evidence in peer-reviewed literature that graphic warning labels, when combined with other interventions, are effective in getting smokers to quit and discouraging people from starting to smoke," said Alexander C. White MS, MD, Chair of the American Thoracic Society's Tobacco Action Committee.

"Smoking is the No. 1 cause of preventable death in the United States."

The FDA has 90 days to appeal this decision to the U.S. Supreme Court. The ATS strongly encourages an appeal of this ill-informed decision.