

Judge rules against graphic anti-smoking labels

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The judge blocked a federal requirement that would have forced tobacco companies to print large images that depict the dangers of smoking on all packs of cigarettes.

The American Cancer Society tells us this latest ruling won't deter it from educating people about the dangers of smoking. At the same time smokers say it doesn't matter if the pictures were put on the packs or not they'd still probably keep smoking.

"Smoking itself is a social activity; most people I know start smoking because other people around them were smoking. Similarly I think if they are going to quit it has to be a social activity, kind of like weight watchers," smoker and UWEC senior Elizabeth Pope says.

Lisa Derks has seen a lot of smokers visit Chester's Bar over her years of bartending there. She says visual graphics aren't enough to stop a nicotine addiction.

"I think in the end it wouldn't have changed, the ones that smoke, especially the ones I see here for the last 17 years, are still going to smoke. I would have liked to see it for the kids' sake," Derks says.

But Joe Lustek with the American Cancer Society says the organization isn't giving up on the campaign to educate people, and especially children on the dangers of lighting up.

"Every year there are approximately 8,000 children in Wisconsin that become smokers that is our primary target. We figure if we can stop children from smoking then they won't smoke as adults," he says.

Lustek says unlike other countries like Poland and Russia, anti-smoking labels haven't been updated in the U.S. since 1984.

"I think it's time we do that here in the U.S., it's long overdue," Lustek says.

The cigarette labels would have gone into effect later this year.

The American Cancer Society says it will continue to fight for changing anti-smoking labels on cigarette packaging.

