

Burning Love: Big Tobacco Takes Aim at LGBT Youths, American Journal of Public Health, July 2002, Vol 92, No 7 pgs 1086-1095

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In the article "Burning Love: Big Tobacco Takes Aim at LGBT Youth" from the American Journal of Public Health takes an inside look at how the tobacco industry covertly (and sometimes overtly) targets LGBT consumers in their advertising. The authors draw interesting parallels between this push for LGBT consumers and the industry's early 50's, 60's, and 70's campaigns targeting African American consumers. The tobacco industry embraced African Americans at a turbulent time when many advertisers and other media outlets were flat-out ignoring them. The author draws parallels between this and the current push for LGBT directed ads. Industry documents note that there was a push in the 1990s to target the LGBT community in their advertisements, at a time when they were similarly being ignored.

Because this industry knows that smokers have to be "hooked while their young", advertisements covertly target minors. Though the days of openly targeting youth with tobacco and alcohol advertisements are over, "a number of studies have determined that children are 3 times as susceptible to advertising than adults and that such advertising is more powerful inducement than is peer pressure" (Washington, 1087; 2002). Though smoking is detrimental for any individual, the authors note that members of the LGBT community smoke at a rate "twice as high as for their peers" (Washington, 1087; 2002).