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Transcript

DATE October 13, 1999
TIME 7:00-9:00 AM
NETWORK NBC-TV
PROGRAM Today

Ann Curry reporting:

For the first time, Philip Morris, is acknowledging publicly that tobacco is not safe. The surprising admission comes in a one-hundred-million-dollar ad campaign, that starts today, as big tobacco fights back. NBC Bob Kur, has details now.

Bob Kur reporting:

A new TV ad about money Philip Morris donates to battered women and children. (Clip from Philip Morris ad)

The tobacco giant trying to change it's image. Acknowledging it's been hurt by its combative posture and denials about the health effects of smoking. (Visual Philip Morris building)

Philip Morris is also launching a Web site. (Visual Philip Morris Web site) An attempt to open a dialogue with the public. On the Web, strong first ever confessions, by Philip Morris about smoking. There is no safe cigarette. It's addictive. And smokers are far more likely to develop serious diseases like cancer than non-smokers. But critics say it still refers to smoking as a risk not as a cause of disease. (Visual Marlboro pack)

When it comes to cause, the company concedes there is an overwhelming medical and scientific consensus. Critics call it a positive step, but say Philip Morris had no choice.

Matt Myers (Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids): It's public opinion ratings have never been lower. It's stock is at or near an all-time low. And this very week, it is re-entering a court-room, in which a jury earlier this summer, found it responsible for a thirty-year conspiracy to deceive the American public.

Kur: Whatever its motives, Philip Morris, has changed it's public position, but it's opponents say the companies

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warnings about smoking-related diseases would do much more good in specific new TV ads aimed at kids, than on a Web site, kids are not likely to visit.

Bob Kur, NBC News, Washington, reporting.

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Curry: A corporate make-over today, as the nation's biggest tobacco company tries to change its image. Philip Morris is introducing a one-hundred-million-dollar ad campaign, it says is aimed at opening a dialogue with the public. (Visual Philip Morris building)

In the campaign, the company admits for the first time, that smoking is dangerous and that there is no safe cigarette. (Visual Philip Morris Web site)

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