

## Smokeless benefits

I was disappointed to read in the Nov. 20 article "[New Snuff Marketing Makes W.Va. Spittin' Mad](#)" comments by West Virginia University researchers and state health officials that misled West Virginia smokers with irresponsible allegations about smokeless tobacco.

Bruce Adkins, director of the state Bureau for Tobacco Prevention, is purposefully misleading when he says, "Here in West Virginia, 4,000 people die every year from tobacco-related illness." He knows that the deaths are due to *smoking*.

Britain's Royal College of Physicians, one of the world's most prestigious medical societies, documented that smokeless tobacco is vastly safer than smoking. Unlike cigarettes, smokeless does not cause lung cancer, heart disease or emphysema. Research clearly shows that the risk for mouth cancer with smokeless is far lower than it is with cigarettes. Statistically, smokeless users have about the same risk of dying from mouth cancer as automobile users have of dying in a car wreck.

American anti-tobacco extremists don't want smokers to know that smokeless tobacco works as a cigarette substitute because it delivers nicotine almost as efficiently as cigarettes. Nicotine is highly addictive but does not cause any smoking-related diseases. That makes it similar to caffeine, which is addictive but safely consumed by millions of Americans in coffee, tea and cola drinks. Modern smokeless tobacco products provide a socially acceptable way for smokers to achieve virtually all the health benefits of being smoke-free without abstaining altogether from nicotine and tobacco.

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