



SEATTLE BILLBOARD: a "refacing" project done by members of international movement

## Billboard 'refacing' growing movement

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People upset with billboards that advertise unhealthy products are taking their message to the streets — with spray paint and ladders.

An international movement, made up largely of doctors and health professionals, is changing the wording of billboards that promote the use of unhealthy substances, particularly tobacco and alcohol.

The group calls itself BUGA UP, for Billboard Utilizing Graffitiists Against Unhealthy Promotions, and refers to its actions as "refacing," rather than defacing, billboards.

Although it has yet to hit Canada in full force, just south of the border in Seattle more than 20 billboards have had their messages altered with bright spray paint by the midnight vigilantes. Among them:

- An ad for Camel filter ciga-

rettes that states "It's a whole new world" has been amended to read: "It's a whole new world of cancer."

• A Winston cigarette ad that read "America's Best" has had the words "way of death" tacked on.

BUGA UP began with the late-night work of three citizens in Sydney, Australia in 1979 and has been gathering momentum ever since. Its work is showing up in Great Britain, New Zealand and the U.S.

The Australian group even makes postcards of its work and has its own journal. Its founder, Fred Cole, was asked to speak at a recent World Health Organization conference on health promotion in Winnipeg.

In Seattle, family doctor Michael Lippman became the first U.S. doctor to be arrested for defacing a cigarette billboard when he was caught in the act.

When the city pressed



DR. MICHAEL LIPPMAN: "reflect the truth"

charges, Lippman entered a plea of necessity, saying sometimes it is more important to break the law than to obey it.

Reached at his office in Seattle, Lippman said tobacco companies spend millions each year to encourage the use of their product.

"Their tactics are blatant. They say you can be cool, macho, if you use this product. We are just adjusting the message to reflect the truth."

When Lippman's case came to court last month, the judge dropped the charges. "He told me not to do it again," the 35-year-old doctor said.