



WHO'S AFRAID OF A SCIENTIST?

PMI'S DR. MOIRA GILCHRIST HAS BEEN DENIED ACCESS TO AN E-CIGARETTE DEBATE IN NEW YORK – A MYSTIFYING MOVE THAT IGNORES THE ROLE OUR COMPANY IS PLAYING IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF SMOKE-FREE ALTERNATIVES FOR ADULTS WHO WOULD OTHERWISE CONTINUE SMOKING.

Everyone deserves access to scientifically substantiated and openly shared information. It is a basic right that we should all expect. But it seems that Vital Strategies disagrees.

Last week, PMI's Vice President for Strategic & Scientific Communications, Dr. Moira Gilchrist, registered for an event they were organizing, 'Hope Meets Reality: E-Cigarettes, a Public Health Harm or Harm Reduction?' in New York. However, she was swiftly uninvited.

IS IT STILL A DEBATE, IF EXPERTS ARE LOCKED OUT?

"Vital Strategies' action is a stark reminder of the barriers that exist when it comes to open and inclusive discussions about smoke-free products for smokers who would otherwise continue to smoke," says Dr. Gilchrist.

"Barring me from these conversations serves nobody's interests. Discussing with us is surely the most progressive step forward. The best choice a smoker can make is to quit tobacco and nicotine altogether. But many don't. These adult smokers deserve the opportunity to have access to and accurate information about smoke-free alternatives."



Dr. Gilchrist's three questions for Vital Strategies:

- 1** Don't smokers who will otherwise continue to smoke (that's most smokers) have a right to learn about and access better alternatives?
- 2** Independent research confirms better alternatives exist, so why won't Vital Strategies, the World Health Organization, and others help support adult smokers in having accurate information about them?
- 3** Why do they ignore the rights of men and women who smoke?

ACCESS DENIED

There are more than a billion smokers in the world. In any given year, on average more than nine out of 10 of them will continue smoking. PMI believes this population deserves science-backed alternatives, and has invested more than \$6bn in the research and development of its smoke-free portfolio.

"The facts are," says Dr. Gilchrist, "that while smoke-free products contain nicotine and are not risk-free, they can be a much better choice than continued smoking. That's because it's the burning of tobacco that causes the production of the vast majority of harmful chemicals that are the primary cause of smoking-related diseases. Of course, this needs to be scientifically assessed for each smoke-free product.

Vital Strategies' [website](#) says it is a global public health organization that "designs solutions to pressing health problems". And yet, as Dr. Gilchrist points out, "They are ignoring scientific developments that can help address a global public health issue, as a complement to existing measures to prevent initiation and encourage cessation."

SMOKERS HAVE A RIGHT TO CURRENT INFORMATION ABOUT ALTERNATIVES

There have been transformations in the automotive and energy industries, as multinationals have created better alternatives which society can change to for a better future.

Electric cars are replacing the combustion engine, and renewable energies are replacing fossil fuels. This is because people understand the importance of making better choices to secure a sustainable future for the planet.

It's clear that the support for transformations in the automotive and energy industries also exists for transformations in tobacco control. The difference is that their calls are currently going unanswered by some decision-makers unwilling to listen or accept that the tobacco industry of today can play a role in helping create a smoke-free tomorrow.

WHY WON'T VITAL STRATEGIES TALK TO DR. GILCHRIST?

“This begs an important question,” adds Dr. Gilchrist. “If other industries’ efforts to bring better products to help address big problems are being encouraged, why aren’t ours?”

Since banning Dr. Gilchrist, Vital Strategies’ website now **states it is** “proud to align [itself] with the World Health Organization” in “upholding a firm non-engagement policy with the tobacco industry”. Dr. Gilchrist points out that this is a misreading of Article 5.3 of the World Health Organization’s Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, point 2.2 of **which states that**:

Where interactions with the tobacco industry are necessary, Parties should ensure that such interactions are conducted transparently.

“This is not a blanket ban,” explains Dr. Gilchrist. “It’s a sensible precaution that doesn’t preclude our involvement, especially when we have a role in developing products that have the potential to be better alternatives to continued smoking.”

WAITING FOR ANSWERS

Dr. Gilchrist says she applied to join this event to share scientific developments relating to smoke-free products, to encourage participants not to forget about the opportunity they hold for public health, and to hear the positions and science others would be sharing. This is an important part of scientific exchange.

There is growing support by governments, scientists and public health experts for the role that smoke-free alternatives can play – as part of a comprehensive tobacco control policy – in reducing smoking prevalence. Indeed, based on PMI’s estimations, this could be achieved at a rate much faster than current WHO predictions.

Dr. Gilchrist’s final point is a direct appeal to the organizers of the event: “Vital Strategies, if you’re serious about tackling the issue of smoking, talk to us, look at what we doing, come and visit our R&D center. This opportunity is too important to be missed.”

HAVE YOUR SAY:

send your comments and questions to
corporatewebsite.pmi@pmi.com


or contact Dr. Gilchrist on Twitter
[@DrGilchrist](https://twitter.com/DrGilchrist)



UNSMOKE YOUR MIND



This is Dr. Moira Gilchrist.
Scientist, mother, dog lover,
questionable taste in music.

 @drgilchrist
If you want to talk

WHO'S AFRAID OF A SCIENTIST?

YOU'D BE SURPRISED.

Today Moira's being denied access to an e-cigarette "debate" hosted by Vital Strategies because they're so scared of her. Seriously.

SHE'D LIKE TO ASK THEM 3 QUESTIONS:

- 1 Don't smokers who won't stop (**that's most smokers**) have a right to smoke-free alternatives?
- 2 Independent researchers confirm better alternatives exist, so **why won't Vital Strategies, the World Health Organization and others help people who smoke move to them?**
- 3 Why do they **ignore the rights** of men and women who smoke?

WHAT ARE THEY AFRAID OF? INFORMED DEBATE?

Unsmoke Your Mind

P.S. If you want to ask, they're meeting (without Dr. Gilchrist) at 8:30 a.m. today at Vital Strategies, 100 Broadway, 4th Floor, New York City.



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