INTRODUCTION

The official indictment of cigarette smoking as a health hazard has created national concern about the problem and generated national action. Since the Surgeon General’s Advisory Committee Report on January 11, 1964, a federal law has been enacted requiring cautionary warnings on cigarette packages, a National Clearinghouse for Smoking and Health has been established in the Public Health Service, and programs of research, education, and information have expanded nationally and locally.

We are in a period of transition. Changes in smoking habits are perceptible, though by no means conclusive. Facts being assembled on smoking behavior are much more pointed than before the Surgeon General’s Report. Social scientists are now distinguishing types of smoking behavior and searching for methods to improve the ability of all types of smokers to control or quit the habit.

Health program administrators and practitioners recognize, however, that any significant progress in reducing the use of cigarettes on a national scale has serious considerations beyond those of health alone. These considerations include the effect of such progress across a wide range of economic and social activity.

In an effort to stimulate an intelligent and productive dialogue between the health and socioeconomic leaders, the Public Health Service, with cooperation of the American Public Health Association, arranged to bring together responsible spokesmen representing both health and nonhealth interests. This meeting took place during the 93rd Annual Meeting of the American Public Health Association in Chicago, Ill., October 20, 1965. The eight papers presented at the meeting are included in this supplement. The first three present heretofore unpublished information on behavioral research and on morbidity in relation to smoking habits.

These papers, along with a “progress report” by Dr. Eugene H. Guthrie of the Public Health Service, serve as background against which the remaining four papers were presented. They deal directly with the possible impact which in the opinion of the authors may be expected as a result of significant change in smoking habits in the fields of agriculture, business, advertising, and tax revenues.