

## **IEHP's Eradicator anti-smoking superhero goes online**

**SAN BERNARDINO, CA** . . . Big Tobacco's worst nightmare has happened.

Inland Empire Health Plan's superhero against smoking – The Eradicator – is online at **theeradicator.org** to support pre-teen children everywhere who are deciding whether or not to smoke cigarettes.

“We've given out thousands of the Eradicator's anti-smoking comic books free to children throughout the two-county Inland Empire area at health fairs, major community events, schools, hospitals and doctors' offices,” said Carl Maier, marketing director of IEHP. “Now anyone with access to the Internet can get the Eradicator's powerful “Don't Smoke” message at any time,” said Maier.

The Eradicator is the second healthcare superhero IEHP has put online to protect children. He teams with IEHP's Rad Rider – Safety Cyclor – whose award-winning Web site (**radrider.com**) encouraging use of bicycle helmets has been acclaimed as "the best graphic-based helmet site on the Web!" by the Bicycle Helmet Safety Institute.

Visitors to the Eradicator's Web site at **theeradicator.org** will find the animated story of a young man on the verge of death from a lifetime of smoking and inhaling second-hand smoke. He is given a set of bionic lungs. Grateful for his restored health, he vows to become the Eradicator and help save the lives of millions more children from Big Tobacco.

6,000 children try their first cigarette each day in America and more than 3,000 of them will become regular smokers, according to the American Medical Association.

“Roughly one of every three regular smokers will eventually die from a tobacco-related disease,” said Maier. “That is why it is so important to get the Eradicator's message out on the Internet to reach as many pre-teens as we possibly can before they become addicted to cigarettes,” stressed Maier.

The Eradicator is the creation of Inland Empire Health Plan and is co-sponsored by the Riverside County Medical Association (RCMA) and the San Bernardino County Medical Society (SBCMS).

IEHP is the local initiative, non-profit health plan created by Riverside and San Bernardino counties to provide access to quality preventative and total health care services to Medi-Cal beneficiaries. IEHP is a participating plan in California's Healthy Families Program and the health care provider for Riverside County's Healthy Kids Program.

Contact IEHP's Community Outreach Unit at (909) 890-2761 for more information about the Eradicator.