

Questions for the IIT Ethics Bowl (October 19, 1996)

While adult use of tobacco has dropped off for many years, smoking rates among teenagers have remained steady for the past decade. The National Cancer Institute has a program that provides financial support to groups of teenagers who, on their own, organize teen sting operations. These operations involve having clearly under-age teens act as undercover decoys to target illegal sales of cigarettes to minors. After determining which businesses make such sales the teens turn the information over to the police or the news media. Jane, a fourteen year old, is well informed about the dangers of cigarette smoking. She herself doesn't smoke, and she worries about the future health of her friends who have taken up smoking. Jane learns about a teen sting program that has recently started in her community. The organizers of the program, two sixteen year olds, Amy and Bill, tell Jane that before the undercover activities begin, every business in the community that sells cigarettes to the public will receive a letter forewarning them.

Should Jane volunteer as an undercover decoy in the program? If so, why? If not, why not?

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