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## New York judge rejects labor-union tobacco suits

NEW YORK — A New York state court justice has dismissed 10 labor-union health-care reimbursement cases against tobacco companies, saying the health plans had no legal standing to bring direct claims against the industry. Tobacco analysts called the decision another "data point" marking the industry's progress toward its goal of getting such lawsuits thrown out, even before they go to trial. The 10 cases, which were filed by 14 New York labor-union health funds, sought to recover the health-care costs associated with alleged smoking-related illnesses of the funds' members. They date to 1997, when health plans including Eastern States Health & Welfare Fund filed the original complaints.

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