

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION LEVEL

National health professional organizations are responsible for action within and outside their organizations. Within their organizations, they should raise awareness among their individual members about tobacco. If awareness is already high, the national health professional organizations could share new scientific research findings, new developments in cessation, and new policy developments. If awareness is low, national health professional associations need to highlight the scientific evidence, the politics and economics of tobacco, the way tobacco promotion works, and other key issues in a more thorough and wide-ranging effort.^{xxx}

Among the membership, national health professional organizations could, among other things:

- Carry out regular surveys of health professionals' tobacco consumption habits and attitudes towards tobacco consumption
- Disseminate the results of the surveys among the members
- Set up a tobacco group within the national health professional organization. This group could, among other things, pass resolutions at member meetings, produce articles on various aspects of tobacco control, lobby for tobacco control among the members, etc
- Educate the membership about tobacco
- Make the national health professional organization's premises and meetings smoke and tobacco-free
- Brief health professional journalists on tobacco issues and encourage regular inclusion of news stories and features about tobacco in the health profession press
- Brief health professionals about cessation and/or organize training to keep them well informed about the latest information on smoking cessation techniques and their cost-effectiveness
- Train those who represent the association in

press interviews on general principles of health advocacy as well as on the various components of tobacco control

- Raise the issue of litigation, train the membership and establish professional links with those pursuing legal action
- Support cessation activities to help health professionals quit and to encourage them to help their patients quit
- Review the investment portfolio of the health professional organization to eliminate tobacco holdings
- Refuse tobacco company representatives' donations for events or congress, or their participation as presenters or speakers because their intention is to confuse the audience through their good-will speech and raise doubts about scientific research on tobacco risks and harm;
- Maintain awareness of any tobacco company strategy to try to influence their institution or to take part in any scientific initiative, thus protecting their association or society from tobacco company influence.

Outside their own organization and membership, national health professional organizations could:

- Contribute to the formulation of a national plan of action for tobacco control
- Work with other health professional organizations to develop a common position on tobacco control and consider establishing a coalition to support common goals and share resources
- Use the news and the media
- Work with politicians to make them feel that it is in their interest to accept invitations to meetings and other events that focus on tobacco control issues
- Campaign for smoke-free/tobacco-free health-care facilities to make non-smoking the norm

- Influence the content of health professional education and motivate students by setting up a tobacco control body
- Prepare a baseline report on tobacco, presenting a detailed review of the country's tobacco problem and highlighting tobacco control priorities
- Carry out regular surveys to monitor progress and measure public knowledge and attitudes about tobacco consumption so that each item of the tobacco control plan of action can be evaluated and adjusted as needed
- Lobby for public and private reimbursement for cessation counselling.

Some examples of involvement of national health professional associations on tobacco control



Pharmacists

The Indian Pharmacist Association (IPA) conducted a survey based on the 'European Pharmacists against smoking survey' developed by EUROPharm Forum in 2001. The survey included community pharmacists, pharmacists in other settings and pharmacy students. The survey examined pharmacists' attitude to smoking and smokeless tobacco consumption. Questions included, "Is your current knowledge about smoking sufficient?", "Should smoking prevention and cessation be included in normal training programmes for pharmacists?", "Do you know the legislative actions taken by your state/central government?", "Are you advising/ will you advise your patients/customers to stop smoking?", "Will you volunteer to write information on smoking cessation to patients/customers?", "Will you volunteer to write information about smoking cessation courses to patients/customers who want to stop smoking?", "Do you actively promote NRT to your patients/customers?" and "Do you feel you have a role to play in the fight for a future free of tobacco?" The IPA used the data collected in developing campaign materials for the National Pharmacy Week 2003. The main theme of the NPW 2003 was 'Pharmacists for the promotion of a future free of tobacco. Materials were distributed to 10 000 pharmacists and pharmaceutical scientists; 65 local and state branches; and 500 diploma and degree colleges. During the National Pharmacy Week 2003, a quiz was conducted and painting (rangoli) was organized; sessions on NRT were provided; and workshops/seminars, silent rallies, etc. were held at the state and local branch levels. The public was sensitized to the role of pharmacists in tobacco control (prevention and cessation) through the press, TV and other media. To this extent, the National Association is to prepare and implement 'Guidelines for Pharmacists for a Tobacco Free Future'.

Source: Presentation on pharmacists for promoting a future free of tobacco in India by M.V. Siva Prasad Reddy and Prafull D. Sheth, SEARPharm Forum, New Delhi, India, 7 September 2004. (<http://www.fip.org/pharmacistsagainststobacco/activities.htm>)

Dentists

In 1992, the Japan Medical-Dental Association for Tobacco Control was founded in order to protect the health of Japanese people from the hazards of tobacco and to promote tobacco control by cooperation between physicians and dentists. Members include: i) physicians or dentists who are non-smokers and who do not encourage production, sale or consumption of tobacco; ii) students who are non-smokers and who do not encourage production, sale or consumption of tobacco.

Source: <http://www.d2.dion.ne.jp/~nosmoke/english.htm>

Physicians

Tobacco is the leading preventable cause of death and disease in Australia. Persuading governments and others to adopt effective strategies to reduce population exposure to tobacco smoke is therefore a crucial goal for the Cancer Council Australia. As a contribution to this effort, the Cancer Council Australia and the National Heart Foundation convened a National Consensus meeting on strategic tobacco policy research in December 1998, at which policy and research experts considered 10 areas of tobacco control. Subsequently, a panel of experts determined the strategic importance and practicality of each of the ideas proposed and developed a list of research priorities. The result is tobacco control in Australia: a priority-driven research agenda.

The document outlines the research needed to support effective tobacco control in this country. The Cancer Council of Australia, together with the National Heart Foundation, the Australian Medical Association and Action on Smoking and Health also developed tobacco facts for medical practitioners. This is an information bulletin for Federal MPs from Australia's leading health organizations. The Cancer Council Australia contributes to international as well as national efforts to control tobacco consumption, as part of its quest to reduce disability and deaths caused by cancer. The Cancer Council Australia is a member of the International Union Against Cancer and the International Non-Governmental Coalition Against Tobacco, and is contributing to global actions such as the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control.

Source: <http://www.cancer.org.au/content.cfm?randid=907897>



Nurses

Historically, nurses in the United States of America have had higher rates of smoking than other health professionals. As the largest group of health-care professionals, nurses have tremendous potential to effectively implement smoking cessation interventions and advance tobacco use reduction goals proposed by Healthy People 2010. In January 2004, the American Association of Colleges of Nursing, the American Nurses Foundation/American Nurses Association and the National Coalition of Ethnic Minority Nurses Associations have therefore established the Tobacco Free Nurses Initiative, funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. The Tobacco Free Nurses Initiative is the first national initiative focused on providing support for nurses who smoke and establishing a framework for engaging nurses in tobacco use prevention and cessation.

The mission of the Tobacco Free Nurses initiative is to ensure that the nursing profession is prepared to actively promote health by reducing nurses' barriers to involvement in tobacco control, including lack of education, smoking among professionals, and lack of nursing leadership. Nurses must be equipped to assist with smoking cessation, prevent tobacco use, and promote strategies to decrease exposure to second-hand smoke. The Tobacco Free Nurses initiative accomplishes its mission through:

- 1) Supporting and assisting smoking cessation efforts of nurses and nursing students
- 2) Providing tobacco control resources for use in patient care
- 3) Enhancing the culture of nurses as leaders and advocates of a smoke-free society

The Tobacco Free Nurses initiative includes:

- 1) a nurse-tailored, web-based intervention for smoking cessation
- 2) educational and mass media materials
- 3) a first ever national summit of nursing leaders to address enhancing the nursing role in tobacco control.

This programme can be used as a model for addressing other important public health problems faced by nurses both personally and professionally.

Source: www.tobaccofreenurses.org