

# Chronic Disease Prevention & Control in the Americas



Monthly Newsletter of the PAHO/WHO Chronic Disease Program  
Pan American Health Organization  
Regional Office of the World Health Organization



Vol. 1, No. 2, February 2007

Editors: James Hospedales, Donna Eberwine

Editorial Staff: Pilar Fano, Elizabeth Cafiero, Enrique Pérez-Flores, María Pico, Suzanna Stephens

## Regional Developments

### WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control

Imagine that the Region of the Americas were under deliberate attack from a powerful entity that was causing enormous amounts of suffering and death. Imagine that the children were a particular target of this entity. This is precisely what is happening—not only in the Americas, but in the whole world today—and *the assaulting entity is the [tobacco industry](#)*. Tobacco, the only legal consumer product proven to kill more than half of its regular users when used as intended, is **responsible for nearly 1 million deaths in the Region of the Americas every year ([5 million deaths worldwide](#))**. If the current trends continue through 2025, tobacco will cause more than 10 million deaths a year worldwide, the vast majority of them in developing countries.



However, this extraordinary suffering and death is not inevitable. One of the major tools in curbing the tobacco epidemic is the [WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control \(FCTC\)](#), which is the first international public health treaty and which contains guidelines and

requirements for the implementation of the most cost-effective tobacco control measures available. The [Tobacco Control team at the PAHO Regional Office](#) provides technical cooperation to help countries become a party to the FCTC and (more importantly) to translate the text of the FCTC into action on a national level by [drafting effective legislation](#).

Key provisions that parties to the WHO FCTC will be required to implement include the following:

- ❌ comprehensive bans on tobacco advertising, sponsorship and promotion (to be implemented within five years of ratification),
- ❌ strong health warnings on tobacco packaging (to be implemented within three years of ratification),
- ❌ protection from secondhand smoke in all indoor workplaces and public places (including restaurants, bars, casinos and discotheques), and
- ❌ measures to increase tobacco taxes and prices as well as to counter the smuggling of tobacco products.



The treaty also addresses a number of other issues, including the disclosure and regulation of ingredients in tobacco products, sale of tobacco products by or to minors, treatment for tobacco addiction, research and exchange of information among countries and promoting public awareness.

## Contents

- Regional Developments ..... 1
  - o WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. 1
  - o Let's eat healthy, live well and get moving America! ..... 2
  - o CARMEN School..... 2
  - o Preventing Chronic Disease: A Framework for Country Action ..... 3
- Progress in the Countries.....4
  - o US-Mexican Border: Preventing Obesity in Children and Young People ..... 4
  - o Subregional Meeting of Representatives & Center Directors from Mesoamerica & the Spanish-Speaking Caribbean ..... 4

As of February 2007, the FCTC has been **ratified by 21 countries (60%) of the Americas** ([144 countries worldwide](#)).

#### FCTC Ratifications in the Americas

Antigua & Barbuda	Honduras
Barbados	Jamaica
Belize	Mexico
Bolivia	Panama
Brazil	Paraguay
Canada	Peru
Chile	Saint Lucia
Dominica	Trinidad & Tobago
Ecuador	Uruguay
Guatemala	Venezuela
Guyana	

Let's eat healthy, live well and get moving America!



The communication campaign's fundraising efforts are in high gear. We are seeking both in-kind and monetary contributions that will allow the implementation of the country

activities in Latin America that are a vital part of the campaign, particularly the "Best Practices Contest" and the expert forum "The Road Show".

On 23 February, 2007, a second gathering and dinner was hosted by the campaign's spokesperson, Mr. Mario Kreutzberger, also known as "Don Francisco," in his Miami residence. The purpose of this gathering was to present PAHO's communication campaign to attendees that included public health leaders, entrepreneurs and industry executives who through their corporate, personal or foundation affiliations can assist the campaign fundraising efforts and help form public/private partnerships that can insure the continuation of campaign activities.

Attendees included PAHO's Director, Dr. Mirta Roses; Mr. Mario Kreutzberger; former U.S. Ambassador Donna Hrinak, now of Kraft Foods

Latin America; Dr. Marie Philippe of Ovations (a company of the UnitedHealth Group); Dr. Pedro Reimon of Pediatric Weight Management Associates; Mr. Carlos de Cespedes of The Pharmed Group; Ms. Jess Gersky of the Pan American Health and Education Foundation (PAHEF); Dr. Douglas Balentine of Unilever The Americas; and from PAHO's HDM/NC unit, Dr. James Hospedales, Dr. Enrique Jacoby, and Ms. María Pico. This gathering served to open doors, establish contacts, engage the invitees in the campaign efforts, and form partnerships that will lead to collaboration and contributions to advance the campaign.



(from left to right: D. Hrinak, J. Gersky, D. Balentine, C. de Cespedes, M. Philippe, J. Hospedales, M. Roses, Don Mario, E. Jacoby, P. Reimon)

Donations may be made to the general campaign through the Pan American Health and Education Foundation ([PAHEF](#)). Please visit [www.dpaslac.org](#).



#### CARMEN School

Carmen School, a project of the [CARMEN](#) network, is a series of training activities to build partnerships between schools of public health (SPHs), public health agencies, and Ministries of Health (MOHs) at the country level in the area of chronic diseases.

**Long-term objectives** of the CARMEN School are:

- i. To support development of competencies to enable public health workers and communities to mount noncommunicable disease (NCD) prevention and health promotion initiatives.
2. To strengthen collaboration between schools of public health, public health agencies, and Ministries of health.

**Short-term objectives** are:

- a. Conduct training courses on integrated NCD prevention for primary-care health professionals, and community workers and leaders.
- b. Establish an exchange program with Preventive Research Centers (PRCs) in the United States to support continuous improvement of the CARMEN School.



At present, **three courses** have been developed by PRCs at universities in the USA and offered throughout the Americas:

- i. *Evidence-Based Public Health*, at the [Saint Louis University School of Public Health](#);
- ii. *Physical Activity and Public Health*, at the [University of South Carolina School of Research and Health Sciences](#); and
- iii. *Social Marketing*, at the University of South Florida ([USF](#)).

**Other partners** in the CARMEN School project are:

- ➔ Florida State University branch in [Panama City](#) (Panama)
- ➔ [Pontifical Catholic University of Chile](#)
- ➔ [Catholic University of the Immaculate Conception](#) (Chile)
- ➔ University of the West Indies (UWI) Department of Public Health (Jamaica)
- ➔ [University of San Carlos](#) (Guatemala)

From 5 to 8 January 2007, as part of the preparation for the social marketing course, the [PAHO Noncommunicable Disease Unit](#) supported

participants from four Latin American countries, with the aim of forming a core group of trainers for that course:

- ➔ From **Brazil**, Viviane Blanco, in charge of health promotion in [Rio de Janeiro](#)
- ➔ From **Mexico**, Anabella Bonavechio, Head of Nutrition Program at the Institute of Public Health ([INSP](#))
- ➔ From **Colombia**, Brenda Pérez, Researcher at the Foundation for Higher Education ([FES](#))
- ➔ From **Chile**, Sonia Olivares, Professor at the [University of Chile](#), Institute of Nutrition of Food Technology ([INTA](#))

PAHO Headquarters was represented by Maria Pico and Branka Legetic. The University of South Florida was represented by Carol Bryant, Co-Director of the Florida Preventive Research Center, and Jim Lindenberger, Director of the Social Marketing Center.

Future plans include offering courses in:

- ➔ **Guatemala** and **Jamaica**, on evidence-based public health (2007);
- ➔ **Uruguay**, in public health and physical activity (2007); and
- ➔ **Mexico**, on social marketing (summer 2008).

### Preventing Chronic Diseases: A Framework for Country Action



From 5 to 8 February 2007, a WHO Expert Consultation on *Preventing Chronic Diseases: A Framework for Country Action* was held in Geneva. The Expert Group strongly supported WHO's initiative to develop a practical tool to assist Member States in updating, strengthening, developing, implementing, and evaluating a national policy, plan and program for the prevention and control of chronic diseases. Participants from the Americas included Dr. David MacLean (who chaired the consultation) and Barbara Legowski, both from Canada, Dr. Deborah Carvallho from Brazil, and Dr. James Hospedales from PAHO Headquarters. The Group also agreed on a workplan to further develop this Framework, with the aim of publishing it in October 2008. For more on this meeting, contact [shaor@who.int](mailto:shaor@who.int).



## Progress in the Countries

### US-Mexican Border: Workshop on Preventing Obesity in Children and Young People

Nutrition experts from the **Pan American Health and Education Foundation (PAHEF)**, including PAHEF board members Drs. [Reynaldo Martorell](#) and



[Fernando Mendoza](#), organized a **Joint US-Mexico Workshop on Preventing Obesity in Children and Youth of Mexican Origin** held last May in Cuernavaca, Mexico.

Among the participants were public health officials, researchers, academics, and representatives from the food industry, foundations, and NGOs. In addition, Drs. Juan Rivera and Simón Barquera from Mexico's National Institute of Public Health (*Instituto Nacional de Salud Pública* / [INSP](#)), both prizewinners of the [2003 Soper Award for Excellence in Health Literature](#), played a leading role in the sessions.

Experts and officials from both sides of the border recognized the need to work together to address the issue of obesity among people of Mexican origin. A consensus was reached to develop joint approaches and share lessons learned, and to develop an evidence-based strategy to prevent obesity.

A recommendation was made to develop a plan of action via the creation of an intergovernmental task force that would

- develop an obesity prevention strategy, including a health education component;
- put the strategy on the political agenda; and
- push for policies and guidelines on environmental modifications in public places.

The overall goal is to encourage cooperative efforts among researchers, public health authorities at various levels, community associations, and the private sector.

For more information on the workshop, see the [report](#) published by the National Science Foundation ([NSF](#)).

To subscribe to the PAHEF E-Newsletter (from which this information was derived), write to [info@pahef.org](mailto:info@pahef.org).

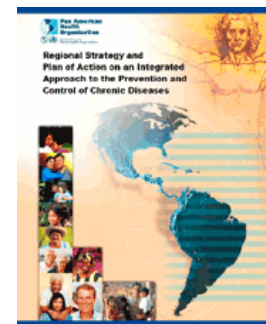


### Subregional Meeting of Representatives and Center



Directors from Mesoamerica and the Spanish-Speaking Caribbean The PAHO Noncommunicable Disease Unit participated in the

[Subregional Meeting of Representatives and Center Directors from Central America, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Mexico, and the US-Mexican Border Field Office](#), held in Belize City from 12 to 16 February 2007. Drs. James Hospedales and Enrique Pérez Flores made a [presentation](#) summarizing the current situation in Central America and presented the [results](#) of the recent [Consultation](#) on the [Regional Strategy on an Integrated Approach to the Prevention and Control of Chronic Diseases Including Diet, Physical Activity, and Health](#), held in Panama City in November 2006.



The presentation included results from the **Central American Diabetes Initiative (CAMDI)** and news on progress PAHO has made in developing tools related to chronic noncommunicable diseases. Afterwards there was a discussion with the PAHO/WHO Representatives and Center Directors to obtain their feedback on setting the stage for the implementation of the Regional Strategy via health activities throughout Central America.

Key recommendations were made by the Representatives and Directors, which included utilizing existing research, conducting economic studies to identifying the impact of chronic disease on poverty, and identifying technical-cooperation projects among the Central American countries, in order to take advantage of the current movement towards integration.

The PAHO/WHO Chronic Disease Program invites the readers of this newsletter to submit contributions of interest for the Americas. Send contributions (1-3 paragraphs) to Dr. James Hospedales ([hospedaj@paho.org](mailto:hospedaj@paho.org)) with copy to Pilar Fano ([fanopili@paho.org](mailto:fanopili@paho.org)) and Suzanna Stephens ([stephens@paho.org](mailto:stephens@paho.org)). Your feedback on this newsletter would be appreciated. Instructions and criteria can be found on the homepage for this newsletter at the web link below:

<http://www.paho.org/english/ad/dpc/nc/cronic.htm>