

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. 2, No. 6, June 2008

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Spotlight: Tobacco

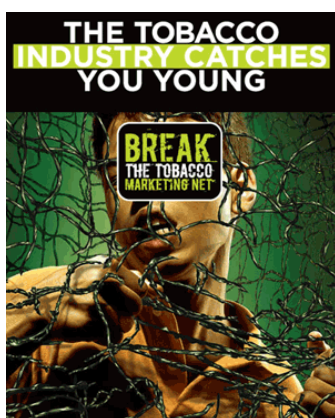
World No Tobacco Day 2008

World No Tobacco Day 2008 (WNTD) was observed on 31 May with the theme “The tobacco industry catches you young: Break the tobacco marketing net.”

WHO is urging governments to protect the world’s 1.8 billion young people by imposing a ban on all tobacco advertising, promotion, and sponsorship, as called for by the *Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC)*, Article 13. (See also “[WHO Calls for a Complete Ban on Tobacco Advertising](#)”.)

Tobacco and Youth

In the words of WHO Director-General Margaret Chan, “In order to survive, the tobacco industry needs to replace those who quit or die with new young consumers. It does this by creating a complex ‘tobacco marketing net’ that ensnares millions of young people worldwide, with potentially devastating health consequences. A ban on all tobacco advertising, promotion, and sponsorship is a powerful tool we can use to protect the world’s youth.”



Numerous studies show that the more young people are exposed to tobacco advertising, the more likely they are to start smoking. Despite this, only 5% of the world’s population is covered by comprehensive bans on tobacco advertising, promotion, and sponsorship. Meanwhile, tobacco companies continue targeting young people by insidiously associating the use of tobacco products with qualities such as glamour, energy, and sex appeal.




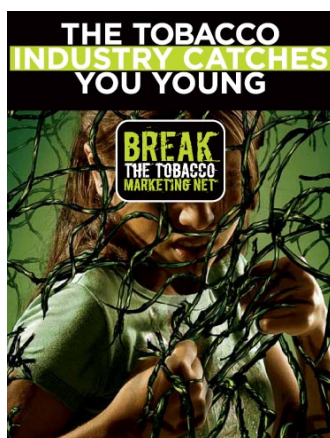
Since most people start smoking before age 18, and almost a quarter of those before age 10, tobacco companies market their products wherever youth can be easily accessed—in the movies, on the Internet, in fashion magazines, and at music and sports venues. In a WHO worldwide school-based study of 13–15-year-olds, more than 55% of students reported seeing advertisements for cigarettes on billboards in the previous month, while 20% owned an item with a cigarette brand logo on it.


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WNTD across the Americas

 **Turks and Caicos Islands** observed their first WNTD with a workshop *Towards a Smoke Free Turks & Caicos Islands: Protecting Workers and the Public from Second-Hand Smoke*. The aim of workshop was to advocate for the establishment of smoke-free environments.




 Youth in **Guyana** hosted a Youth Rally, *Smoke Free Me, Smoke Free You*. Youths from schools in the city of Georgetown performed and communicated anti-tobacco messages aimed at promoting “tobacco-free youth” through song, poetry, and dance.

 In **Montevideo, Uruguay**, a giant cigarette was destroyed in a symbolic act to demonstrate youth opposition to tobacco. Over 500 young people participated in the symbolic act and stayed on to enjoy a ‘rockin’ performance by a Uruguayan rock band.



Symbolic destruction of cigarette to mark WNTD 2008 in Uruguay

 Among several activities in **Mexico**, the federal government announced the enactment of a General Law for Tobacco Control.



In **Jamaica**, an exhibit on Smoke-Free Environments



In **Cuba**, youth performance with anti-tobacco messages

Awards and Recognition for the Americas




WHO Director-General Margaret Chan, on the occasion of WNTD, honored individuals who have made outstanding contributions to tobacco control in the PAHO region, including:



The Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), for their leadership in the 2007 [CARICOM Summit on Chronic Noncommunicable Diseases \(CNCDs\)](#): Chan gave special recognition to The Honorable Denzil Douglas, Prime Minister of St. Kitts and Nevis; The Right Honorable Owen Arthur, Former Prime Minister of Barbados; and The Honorable Patrick Manning, Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago. The summit’s final [Declaration of Port of Spain](#) calls on member states to pursue immediately an agenda on tobacco control, e.g., raising and earmarking tobacco taxes for health interventions, promoting smoke-free environments, banning tobacco advertising and promotion, and introducing effective health warnings.



Representatives of Youth Advocacy Groups in Argentina, Colombia, and Uruguay

-  **Argentina:** Javier Rivera of Santa Fe and Sebastián Parada of Mendoza (both involved in the Bloomberg *Smoke-Free Argentina* project), for an air-monitoring initiative in which they measured smoke particle levels in restaurants, bars, and discos.
-  **Uruguay:** Florencia Maldonado Torres of Montevideo, for her exhibit about tobacco for young people, which drew thousands of visitors.
-  **Colombia:** Luis Enrique Cuesta Martínez of Bogotá, for organizing protests and capacity-building events to take the FCTC to the United Nations.


These groups also attended the [Ibero-American Tobacco Control Conference](#) in Brazil last September, where they signed a *Youth Declaration and Call to*


Action aimed at young people from throughout the Americas. They are now planning national workshops in Argentina and Uruguay.

Brazil: The Alliance for Tobacco Control (*Aliança de Controle do Tabagismo / ACTbr*), for mobilizing advocacy for tobacco control. This alliance includes more than 350 registered member organizations and activists from all over the country encompassing a broad diversity of sectors. It recently won a Bloomberg Foundation award of more than \$1 million for advocacy against tobacco.

In **Bolivia**, the **Commission for the Fight Against Tobacco** (*Comisión de Lucha Antitabáquica, COJLAT*), for developing and publishing audiovisual educational materials, for its active support of the FCTC in Bolivia, and for establishing smoke-free environments in the public and private sectors.

Planned Events: FCTC Workshops

 **Caribbean:** Kingston, Jamaica, 12–15 August 2008.

 **Latin America:** Lima, Peru, 9–12 September 2008.

The workshops' objective is to build the capacity of PAHO member countries to meet their FCTC obligations. Participants will be the tobacco focal points from the ministries of health and finance and national agencies in charge of developing and monitoring standards for the packaging and labeling of tobacco products. The workshops will focus on compliance with Article 11 "Packaging and Labeling," Article 8 "Protection from Exposure to Tobacco Smoke," Article 6 "Price and Tax Measures to Reduce the Demand for Tobacco," and Article 15 "Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products." The workshops are a collaborative effort between WHO, the FCTC secretariat, the Canadian Lung Association, and PAHO.



For more PAHO information on WNTD, see the [press release](#) and the Director's blog, [For a Tobacco-Free Youth](#), as well as the [Tobacco Control](#) page.








Source: [World No Tobacco Day 2008 Observed with Awards in the Americas](#). *Medical News Today*, 4 June 2008.

Jamaican Heart Foundation Receives Regional Grant for Tobacco Warnings

In April, the Heart Foundation of Jamaica (HFJ), on behalf of the Jamaica Coalition for Tobacco Control and its partners, received a regional grant from the [Bloomberg Global Initiative](#) to ensure the implementation of rotating picture-based package warnings on tobacco products sold in Caribbean countries. This grant will be administered through the campaign for [Tobacco-Free Youth](#).



Project in a Nutshell

-  **Project Title:** "Introducing a Picture-Based Health Warning System on Cigarette Packages in the Caribbean"
-  **Primary Objective:** To achieve a strong cigarette labeling standard in the countries of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).
-  **Grant Amount:** US \$627,824
-  **Duration:** 24 months
-  **Start Date:** 1 April 2008
-  **Scope:** Regional: The Caribbean, including Barbados, Guyana, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago (4 target countries)
-  **Outreach:** The population of the four countries involved in the project

Project strategies will include lobbying with national politicians, raising awareness among key decision-makers and community leaders, and mobilizing and informing strategic sectors of the public, including the media, in support of the warnings.

Project partners include a variety of committed nongovernmental organizations (NGOs):

- ➔ The Heart & Stroke Foundation of Barbados Inc. (HFOB; also see HSFOB), whose mission is to keep people heart healthy and reduce suffering and death from heart disease and stroke.
- ➔ The [Guyana Chest Society](#), affiliated with the International Union against Tuberculosis and Lung Diseases (IUATLD).



- The [Trinidad and Tobago Cancer Society](#), whose main purpose is to promote the early detection of cancer through screening, education, and advocacy.
- The [Inter-American Heart Foundation](#), whose mission is to “reduce disability and death from cardiovascular diseases and stroke in the Americas.” It is affiliated with the [World Heart Federation](#), the [American Heart Association](#), the [Heart & Stroke Foundation of Canada](#), the Inter-American Society of Cardiology ([Sociedad Interamericana de Cardiología](#)), and heart foundations and societies throughout the Americas.

Project Staffing: The project office is situated in the HFJ, which is responsible for project implementation in the four target countries. The office is staffed by a project manager, Barbara McGaw, and a communications officer, Dawn Williams, with additional administrative support from HFJ. The Executive Director of the HFJ, Deborah Chen, will oversee the project. Each of the other three countries will have a project officer in the NGOs specified above.

Project Framework: The project will address Article 11 of the FCTC, which requires Parties, three years after entry into force, to adopt and implement, in accordance with national law, effective measures that “obligate the placement of rotating health warnings on tobacco packaging that cover at least 30% (but ideally 50% or more) of the principal display areas and can include pictures or pictograms.”

Political Support for the Project: The ministries of health of Guyana, Barbados, Jamaica, and Trinidad & Tobago are all signatories to the CARICOM Declaration of Port-of-Spain, *Uniting to Stop the Epidemic of Chronic Noncommunicable Diseases*, of 15 September 2007. Together, this group of countries represents 4,986,000 people, or more than 78.3% of the population of the English-speaking Caribbean.



One of the winners of the WNTD poster competition in Trinidad & Tobago



Project Background

Deaths Due to Tobacco: Although tobacco deaths rarely make headlines, tobacco kills one person every six seconds. Tobacco kills a third to half of all people who use it, on average 15 years prematurely. Today, tobacco use causes 1 in every 10 deaths among adults worldwide—claiming more than five million lives every year!

Tobacco Use in the Caribbean: The prevalence of tobacco use in the Caribbean is estimated at about 15% in youth and approximately 10–25% in the population over age 15. Data on Jamaica from the *Global Youth Tobacco Survey* (GYTS) in 2006 showed that one-fifth of students surveyed (13–14-year-olds) used some form of tobacco; 17% smoked cigarettes, and 12% used other tobacco products. In a recent presentation on tobacco in Trinidad and Tobago, estimates of tobacco-related deaths, as a percentage of all deaths due to illness, ranged from 30% in males to 14% in females.

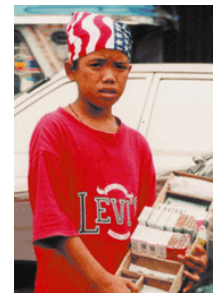


Current Initiatives: CARICOM/CROSQ Standard for Packaging and Labeling of Tobacco Products

To date, nine Caribbean countries have signed and ratified the FCTC. The first time-bound obligation is set out in Article 11, Packaging and Labeling. (Jamaica has been the first country to meet this obligation, due 7 July 2007.)

In almost all the Caribbean countries, regulations governing tobacco package warnings are largely outdated or do not exist. Each country has the authority to regulate tobacco packaging on a national basis; however, CARICOM—through the *Caribbean Regional Organization for Standards and Quality* (CROSQ)—has the authority to develop standards for the region as a whole.

In 2005, CROSQ designated the Labeling Technical Committee of the Bureau of Standards (BOS) of Jamaica to



develop a standard for the packaging and labeling of cigarettes. BOS prepared a draft standard, which has been circulated to member states for their comments.



Once the BOS standard is finalized, CROSQ will work at ensuring the implementation of rotating picture-based package warnings on tobacco products sold in Caribbean countries as per the specifications of the standard.



Challenges

Political support is crucial. The main challenge to the implementation of warnings comes from the tobacco industry. Effective political support across all Caribbean countries will be required to counteract tobacco industry lobbying in the region. In this context, the CARICOM/CROSQ packaging and labeling process and the Bloomberg project will complement each other, as the region works to ensure a strong standard for the packaging and labeling of tobacco products that will protect the health of the region's citizens.



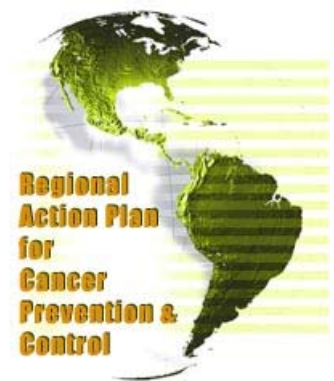
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Spotlight: Cancer

Stakeholders' Meeting for Regional Action Plan

Cancer control leaders, researchers, health professionals and program managers from 19 countries and 10 partner organizations gathered at PAHO headquarters in Washington, DC, on 11-12 June 2008 to discuss a [Regional Action Plan for Cancer Prevention and Control](#). This is part of the [Regional Strategy on Chronic Diseases](#), in which PAHO is scaling up its efforts in cancer prevention and control.



During the meeting, participants were provided with a status report on the current country capacities and the response from PAHO in providing technical cooperation for comprehensive

cancer control. This includes actions in areas such as tobacco control, physical activity and healthy eating promotion, occupational and environmental health, cervical cancer and breast cancer prevention, radiation health, and palliative care. Participants also received reports on what partner organizations were doing in the Americas in terms of cancer prevention and control. Afterwards, everybody was asked to review the [proposed plan of action](#), which defined a set of objectives to enhance PAHO's cancer control efforts and coordinate approaches with partners already working in the Region.



Through working group discussions and plenary presentations, the participants provided rich input to and feedback on the proposed action plan. The plan will now be revised to include these suggestions and will be circulated throughout the Region for additional consultation before finalization. Specific areas for collaboration between PAHO and partners were defined, namely in cancer policy, treatment, palliative care and research.



Some of the key conclusions from the meeting include the following:

- The [Latin American and Caribbean Alliance for Cancer Control](#), which was initiated during the November 2007 *International Cancer Congress*, will be operationalized and utilized as a forum for the delivery of the Cancer Plan of Action.
- A joint coordination secretariat will be established to oversee and monitor the implementation of the Cancer Plan of Action.
- A follow-up meeting of cancer stakeholders will be held during the [UICC World Cancer Congress](#) in August 2008.
- It was proposed that the Cancer Plan of Action be presented to the 2009 PAHO Directing Council to bring greater attention and public health priority to the topic.

*Prevent what is preventable,
cure what is curable,
provide palliative care for patients in need,
& monitor and manage for results.*

Fact Sheets on Cancer in the Americas

- [Cancer in Latin America and the Caribbean \(LAC\)](#)
- [PAHO's Current Activities](#) in Cancer Prevention & Control, 2008
- [New Alliance](#) for Cancer Prevention & Control
- [Cancer Organizations](#) Active in LAC

Towards Comprehensive Cervical Cancer Prevention & Control

May 12 - 13 2008
Mexico City, Mexico



Towards Comprehensive
Cervical Cancer
Prevention and Control
Region of the Americas

WHO has convened a series of worldwide regional meetings to consult stakeholders on issues related to HPV vaccine introduction and strengthening of cervical cancer prevention and control programs. In the Americas, the stakeholders' meeting *Towards*

Comprehensive Cervical Cancer Prevention and Control was organized by WHO, PAHO, the [Sabin Institute](#) and the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ([CDC](#)) and held in Mexico City 12–14 May 2008. It was a unique opportunity to unite a diverse range of stakeholders and to discuss the varied perspectives on this complex public health issue. Present were over 160 participants from 24 countries representing ministry of health programs on immunization, adolescent health, sexual and reproductive health, and cancer—as well as representatives from industry, academia, nongovernmental organizations, and collaborating institutions including the *Program for Appropriate Technology in Health* ([PATH](#)), the *International Union Against Cancer* ([UICC](#)), and the *International AIDS Vaccine Initiative* ([IAVI](#)).

During the meeting, participants discussed the current evidence regarding HPV vaccines and new technologies for cervical cancer screening; reviewed the state of cervical cancer prevention programs in the Americas, including country experiences with HPV vaccine introduction; and provided recommendations to WHO/PAHO regarding the need to strengthen cervical cancer prevention and control programs, and the introduction of novel screening strategies and HPV vaccines.



The participants adopted a declaration that calls for increased action to improve the quality and coverage of screening programs and urges support for efforts by PAHO's [Revolving Fund](#) to negotiate affordable HPV vaccine prices. The meeting results will be used for the WHO process for pre-qualifying the HPV vaccines and for the *Regional Strategy and Plan of Action for Cervical Cancer Prevention and Control* (CE142/10), which was presented this month to the PAHO Executive Committee.

For more information, see PAHO press releases: [“Researchers Report that Better Screening, Treatment, and Affordable Vaccines Can Prevent Doubling of Cervical Cancer Deaths in Latin America, Caribbean,”](#) [“Experts Appeal for Integrated Programs to Prevent Cervical Cancer.”](#)

Congress on Childhood Cancer

The [First Congress on Early Detection of Childhood Cancer in Tamaulipas](#) was held at the Civic Center in Ciudad Victoria, Tamaulipas, Mexico, on 16–17 June 2008. It was organized by the Voluntary Association against Cancer (*Asociación de Voluntad Contra el Cáncer*) as part of their 15th anniversary celebrations. PAHO's [US–Mexico Border Field Office](#) in El Paso, Texas, collaborated and participated in this event.



The main purpose of the event was to:

1. Provide current scientific information on childhood cancers as a continuous education opportunity for health professionals.
2. Raise the level of awareness of the population of Tamaulipas with regard to childhood cancer.
3. Establish dialogue among the associations active in the area of childhood cancer in Mexico.
4. Ensure that the public recognizes that 70% of childhood cancer is curable if diagnosed early and treated appropriately.

Over 1,000 people attended this congress. Participants included health professionals from Mexico, and particularly Tamaulipas state, as well as professionals from a broad range of academic and medical disciplines, patients living with cancer, family members, students, and the general public. Noteworthy was the attendance of local, state, and national public-sector institutions and welfare/philanthropic associations involved in the fight against cancer in children.

In addition to presentations covering a broad spectrum of topics related to childhood cancer, highlights of the event included a townhall-style inaugural ceremony by the governor of Tamaulipas, Eugenio Hernández Flores, and his wife, Mrs. Adriana González de Hernández. The keynote speaker was Dr. Denise Dresser, of Princeton University. Cancer associations participated in a roundtable discussion. Most infectious of all, however, was the group Laughter Therapy (*Risa terapia*) who, dressed as clowns, bring smiles to



Doctors dressed as clowns from the laughter therapy group, RISA TERAPIA

children suffering from cancer, and who lent a general note of humor and gaiety to the closing ceremony. The event ended with a unanimous



Rousing applause from the public during closing ceremony

commitment to a healthy Mexico where a child diagnosed with cancer does not have to die.

Source: Dr. [Rosalba Ruiz](#), PAHO US-Mexico Border Field Office, El Paso, Texas.

STOP THE GLOBAL EPIDEMIC OF CHRONIC DISEASE

PROMOTE. PREVENT. TREAT. CARE



Integrated Chronic Disease Prevention & Control



The PAHO/WHO Chronic Disease Program invites the readers of this newsletter to submit contributions on activities related to chronic disease in the Americas. Send contributions (1-3 paragraphs) to Dr. James Hospedales (hospedaj@paho.org) with copy to Pilar Fano (fanopili@paho.org) and Suzanna Stephens (stephens@paho.org). Letters to the Editor should be addressed to Silvana Luciani (lucianis@paho.org). 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>