

Trading Away Health: The Influence of Trade Policy on Youth Tobacco Control

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Key Words:

youth smoking, tobacco control, global trade, health policy, global health

Learning objectives:

1. Understand the undue influence of international trade laws on efforts to curb tobacco use
2. Shed light on this relatively unknown link (between tobacco and trade) in written and oral presentations
3. Immerse myself in the requisite advocacy techniques to conduct successful policy reform

Project objectives

1. Broadly speaking, my objective is to change the way the US Trade Representative's Office approaches the issue of tobacco. Tobacco is not a 'good' that should be traded and sold like any other consumer product in the market. It is dangerous and lethal and must not be afforded the same trade protections granted to other goods and services.
2. Create a coalition within the medical community to more powerfully advocate for the first aforementioned objective, and work with this coalition to align U.S. trade policy with public health principles.

Activities

(As listed below with itemized outcomes)

Research Outcomes:

1. Sud SR, Brenner JE, Shaffer ER. Are We Trading Health Away? The Case of Global Tobacco Control.

Iterations of this research were presented at the following meetings:

Posters/Abstracts:

- a) Academic Pediatric Association Joint Region IX and X Meeting (January 2012)
- b) University of California Global Health Day (February 2012)
- c) PHR National Conference/Sujal Parikh Symposium (March 2012)
- d) Pediatric Academic Societies' Annual Meeting (April 2012, Poster #1503.121)

Oral Presentation:

- e) American Public Health Association National Meeting (October 2012)

2. Accepted to attend multidisciplinary training session on tobacco control in Washington, DC:

- a) Protecting Children and Families from Tobacco: Leadership Advocacy Training (April 2013). Hosted by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP), American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG), American College of Physicians (ACP), and the American Medical Association (AMA)

Advocacy Outcomes

1. Submitted Testimony to US Congress

- a) Joint Statement from American Academy of Pediatrics (Block R), American College of Preventive Medicine (Alexander M), American Society of Addiction Medicine (Geier-Horan A), Center for Policy Analysis on Trade & Health (Sud SR, Brenner JE, Shaffer ER), and American Academy of Family Physicians (Houston T). December 2011. "Exclude Tobacco from Trade Rules to Protect Public Health." Testimony to the Trade Subcommittee of Ways and Means Committee, U.S. House of Representatives regarding December 14, 2011 Hearing on the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement. URL: <http://infojustice.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/shaffer01302012.pdf>

2. Organized and funded meeting bringing together tobacco/trade leaders for strategy session; gave an oral presentation at this meeting to outline the key issues at hand

a) California Statewide Consortium on Tobacco Control and Trade; San Francisco (February 2013). Hosted by Center for Policy Analysis on Trade & Health and by UCSF Center for Tobacco Research and Education. Funded by UC Tobacco Related Disease Research Program. For more info: <http://www.cpath.org/id50.html>

3. Submitted advocacy letters to key stakeholders

a) Letter to US Trade Representative Ron Kirk (May 15, 2012) from AAP, AAFP, ACOG, ACP, ACPM, AMA, and CPATH. Available for viewing at:
http://www.cpath.org/sitebuildercontent/sitebuilderfiles/med_pub_health_tpp_tobacco_16_may_2012.pdf

b) Letter to US Trade Representative Ron Kirk (April 23, 2012) from AAP, AAFP, ACPM, AMA, AMSA, and CPATH. Available for viewing at:
http://www.cpath.org/sitebuildercontent/sitebuilderfiles/support_final_us_position_4-24-12.pdf

4. Assisted journalist with lay press article about undue influence of trade policy on tobacco control

a) Levin M. As Nations Try to Snuff Out Smoking, Cigarette Makers Use Trade Treaties to Fire Up Legal Challenges. (November 29, 2012). FairWarning.org Available at:
<http://www.fairwarning.org/2012/11/as-nations-try-to-snuff-out-smoking-cigarette-makers-use-trade-treaties-to-fire-up-legal-challenges/> This article was subsequently re-published at NBCnews.com.

Lessons in Implementation

1. Margaret Mead was right: a small group of people can and do make a large difference
2. Policy reform is incremental and slow, and requires diligence for perseverance. Timing one's approach to opportune moments (e.g., in the political cycle) can expedite the process
3. Despite a shared vision, the strategies endorsed by individuals stakeholders at times conflict with one another.

Potential future projects:

1. Conduct further research into the potential impact of global trade laws on local tobacco control efforts (e.g., in California)
2. Publish an academic manuscript or commentary on the issue of trade and tobacco control
3. Continue to advocate for excluding tobacco products from receiving trade protections

Resources

1. Ellen Shaffer and Joe Brenner, Center for Policy Analysis on Trade & Health
2. Stanton Glanz, UCSF Center for Tobacco Research and Education
3. Phil Gardiner, UC Tobacco Related Disease Research Program
4. Center for Tobacco Free Kids