Submission to the
World Health Organization
on the
Global Tobacco Control Committee

Massachusetts Coalition For a Healthy Future
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The Massachusetts Tobacco Control Program and the FCTC Should Promote Similar Campaigns in the Treaty

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts’ Department of Public Health of the United States of America supports the Framework Convention for Tobacco Control and applauds the World Health Organization (WHO). The experience in Massachusetts has shown that well-funded, comprehensive tobacco control programs operated by public health agencies can greatly reduce tobacco use which will result in large reductions in smoking related death and disease in the future.

The WHO Should Incorporate the Tobacco Control Activities into the FCTC

Since 1993, Massachusetts had committed approximately $40 million annually ($8 per capita) for a comprehensive tobacco control program. The Program has three objectives: to reduce smoking among adults, prevent youth initiation and protect non-smokers from the dangers of second hand smoke. To achieve these objectives, the program supports a number of interventions including an aggressive mass media campaign that de glamorizes smoking and deals with the dangers of tobacco use and second hand smoke. The Program supports passage and enforcement of local laws that restrict youth access to tobacco products and prohibit smoking in public places. The Program also funds local community and school education initiatives and provides free treatment of nicotine addiction through counseling and provision of therapeutic agents in health care settings.

Adult Smoking is Down

The Program has been highly effective. Since 1993, overall cigarette consumption has declined 36% (four times the U.S. average.) Adult smoking has fallen from 23% to 18% and daily smoking rates among adults have fallen to 14%.

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![Graph of Packs of Cigarettes Purchased Annually, Per Adult (US, MA & CA)](image)

![Graph of Adult Smoking Prevalence](image)

![Graph of Daily Smokers](image)

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Source: Massachusetts Tobacco Survey
**Youth Smoking Has Declined**
This is one of the lowest rates in the world. Smoking among adolescents has fallen 25% and among young children ages 10 and 11, cigarette use has fallen 50%. There is no reason to believe that if similar programs were adopted in other states or provinces dramatic reductions in tobacco use would not be achieved.

**Illegal Sales of Tobacco Products to Youth are Down**
These achievements are due to the successful interventions. Illegal sales of tobacco products to youth fell from 50% in 1995 to less than 10% in 2000.

**Non-Smokers Are Protected from Second Hand Smoke**
The percent of the state’s population residing in communities with restrictions on smoking in restaurants rose from 13% to 80%. Smoking has been banned in all state buildings.
Massachusetts Has Adopted New Policies Which the FCTC Should Promote

The price of cigarettes also increased due to taxation and the Master Settlement Agreement (MSA) signed between the states attorney generals. The price rose from $1.81 in 1993 to $4.10 in the year 2000. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts also sued the tobacco industry for health care costs associated with cigarette smoking among the state’s medicaid population. The state was the fifth to file a lawsuit and settle with the tobacco industry in 1998 for $7.8 billion to be paid over the next 25 years. The State has divested its pension fund of tobacco stock. The Framework Convention should encourage nations to adopt similar programs. It will have an enormous influence in reducing future death and disease on a global basis.

Massachusetts Has Taken a Lead in Tobacco Product Characterization and the FCTC Should Promote Product Characterization and Regulation Worldwide

Massachusetts has taken a lead in the United States in requiring tobacco manufacturers to report on tobacco product additives, toxic constituents in smoke and how much nicotine is actually ingested into the body. These actions are important because not only will they better educate consumers about the toxic and addictive properties of cigarettes, but they could encourage tobacco companies to reduce the toxicity of existing products. Also, such information will lay the framework for future product regulation.

Tobacco Industry Still Targets Women and Children in Massachusetts

The tobacco industry has a long history of targeting women and youth in Massachusetts. There is ubiquitous advertising in our state that targets young females through advertising in magazines, newspapers, and other media. The advertising portrays smoking as a glamorous practice and since the introduction of the first dedicated cigarette brand into Massachusetts in the mid-1960s (Virginia Slims) we have seen a sharp increase in smoking among both adolescent girls as well as women overall. This rise in female smoking over the past 20 years has resulted in lung cancer becoming the number one cause of cancer death among women in our state. Female lung cancer rates have increased 8% over the past 10 years. Children have also been targeted by the tobacco industry. Research has been conducted that shows that cigarette advertising reaches and appeals to children and influences their perception of the social acceptability of smoking thus predisposing them to smoke. These data are summarized in the 1994 Surgeon
Generals Report. Other data come directly from the tobacco industry. There have been numerous internal documents made available through litigation by the states’ attorney generals that show that the tobacco industry targeted adolescents in the United States of America.

**FCTC Should Deal with Smuggling, Taxation and Advertising**

It is critically important that the FCTC deal with the issue of smuggling. Once again, litigation in the United States and documents obtained from the Minnesota Depository have shown that tobacco manufacturers are actively engaged with smuggling cigarettes. This is a public health concern since smuggling will lower the price of cigarettes because of taxes not paid. Taxation has been shown to be an important public health tool in reducing cigarette consumption. Many smuggled cigarettes do not bear warning labels so the consumer will not be adequately informed of the risks associated with smoking. Smuggling also weakens the resolve of nations to limit competition in the market place and allows the multinational tobacco industry to gain a foothold into a country where multinational cigarettes are not present. Smuggling becomes the first tool to make a cigarette market competitive which in turn will result in increased consumption.

Taxation is also an important area that the FCTC should address. As we have shown in Massachusetts, raising the price of cigarettes through taxation will reduce cigarette consumption. Research has shown that there is a price effect for both adults and children. If cigarette prices are raised 10%, we can expect 4% of adults to quit and a small proportion to cut down. The price effect is even greater among adolescents. Research done in the United States shows that a 10% price increase would reduce youth smoking by approximately 7%. There is no reason to suspect that these findings can not be applied to other nations throughout the world. Taxation also provides an important source of revenue to fund tobacco control measures recommended by the convention. The states of Massachusetts, California, Oregon, and Arizona have raised the cigarette prices through taxation and dedicated a portion of the tax for comprehensive campaigns. Once again, there is no reason that other nations should not raise the prices and allocate a portion of the tax to fund comprehensive campaigns to curb smoking.

The FCTC should address advertising. There is virtually no information within cigarette advertising that provides consumers with meaningful facts about the product. In fact, most of the advertising done within the state of Massachusetts does exactly the opposite. Advertising for light cigarettes implicitly misinforms consumers about the dangers of smoking. Consumers believe that such products are safer than regular cigarettes and such advertising serves as a deterrent to quitting. Advertising also entices the young to experiment and become dependent upon nicotine. Of major concern is the use of global advertising by satellite networks and international cable television to bring cigarette advertising into nations throughout the world. The FCTC could provide an important global standard for addressing the growth of electronic advertising in worldwide media.

**Massachusetts and the U.S. Will Benefit from the FCTC**

Massachusetts and the United States of America have yet to address important areas in tobacco control. These include better warning labels, total prohibition of advertising as
well as regulation of the tobacco product. This past year, the United States Supreme Court ruled that the US Food and Drug Administration lacked legal authority to regulate tobacco products and their marketing. During the next Congress new legislation may be considered and a global standard will be extremely important for the United States or even the state of Massachusetts to adopt further measures to curb tobacco use.

**Massachusetts Will Actively Support the FCTC**
Massachusetts will continue to conduct research on the efficacy of the interventions that we have put in place and provide meaningful data to the WHO so that it can support the FCTC provisions.

**Other Governments Should Actively Support the FCTC**
It is extremely important for governments to support the FCTC, not only for its passage, but also for the implementation of its provisions. We applaud the WHO for engaging in this treaty making activity. We firmly believe the purpose of the treaty is to advance world health. As U.S. states like Massachusetts achieve lower levels of smoking multinational tobacco companies will be pressured to find replacement smokers, many of whom are from a developing world. We are fearful that these companies that have developed some of the most sophisticated marketing campaigns for any consumer product have done so in one of the most hostile markets to cigarette smoking. The United States of America will unleash these marketing practices on women and children from poor nations. The results can be devastating unless we have a global treaty that sets world standards for tobacco control. Massachusetts unconditionally supports the WHO’s efforts in this area and looks forward to working with you.