

Tobacco Free Kansas Coalition

E-Newsletter

Supporting Tobacco Control for Kansas

August 2007, Volume 2, Issue 7

Welcome to the TFKC E-Newsletter for those interested or involved in tobacco control in Kansas. We would like to hear your comments and ideas for future issues. See the "Sign Up" information on the previous page to receive this e-newsletter every month.

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Membership Fees Eliminated

On July 12, members of the Tobacco Free Kansas Coalition voted to remove the requirement for membership fees from the TFKC bylaws. This was done as a way to encourage even more organizations and individuals to become participating members in the Coalition.

Now is a great opportunity to invite those who have an interest in tobacco control in Kansas to participate in the activities of TFKC.

A new membership form is being prepared and will be sent to all current members to update membership information and provide for more individualized contacts to members on information pertinent to their region. The revised form also will be placed on the TFKC Web site where it can be shared with interested individuals and groups.

New Officers Elected

New TFKC officers were elected at the July meeting. They include Lisa Benlon, president; Dr. Jon Hauxwell, immediate past president; Terri Roberts, vice president; Kathy Bruner, secretary; Linda DeCoursey, treasurer; and regional representatives Dr. Jim Gardner (north central), Patricia Dunlap (northwest), Michelle Correll (southwest), Maranda Collins (southeast), Miriam Ibrahim (south central) and Nicole Brown (northeast). Completing their terms as regional representatives are Anita Mason (southwest), Jennifer Kelley (south central) and Janel Rose (northwest).

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State to Help Employees Get Healthy - Including Stop Smoking

The Kansas Health Policy Authority recently announced a plan to conduct health-risk assessments next year of those enrolled in the state employee health benefit plan and then match employees with services to help control chronic diseases, lose weight, stop smoking or talk with a life coach.

The health authority hopes this effort will serve as a model for other employers throughout the state to promote health in their workforce.

The state's plan covers about 88,000 state employees and their families, retirees and some non-state government workers. Focusing on curbing tobacco use and reducing obesity – one in three people covered by the state's plan is overweight or obese, and one in four smokes – the state hopes to attack the root causes of chronic disease and teach people how to take better care of themselves. The health risk assessments are voluntary, but incentives, such as credit towards employee's insurance premiums, also will be tied in to the program to encourage participation.

Lung Cancer and Women

In the July issue of *Nicotine and Tobacco Research*, a new peer-reviewed study focuses on misperceptions by women on the leading causes of cancer deaths. It found the majority of women (66.7 percent) inaccurately believed that breast cancer is the leading cause of cancer death among women, whereas only 29.7 percent correctly indicated lung cancer as the leading cause of cancer death among women. Black women were significantly more likely to indicate breast cancer as the leading cause of cancer death among women as compared to White women.

The article also found that awareness of anti-smoking messages or advertisements were associated with a higher probability of correctly indicating lung cancer as the leading cause of cancer mortality among women.

Step Taken to Regulate Tobacco

On August 1 a U.S. Senate committee passed legislation that would for the first time allow federal regulation of cigarettes and other tobacco products. The bill, approved 13-8 by the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, would require the Food and Drug Administration to restrict tobacco advertising, regulate warning labels and remove hazardous ingredients.

The agency also would be given the authority to set standards for products that tobacco companies advertise as "reduced risk" products.

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The bill has broad bipartisan support in the Senate, where more than 50 senators have signed on as co-sponsors. A similar bill passed the chamber in 2004 but was blocked in the House.

The tobacco legislation was crafted through several years of negotiations. The bill would allow the FDA to reduce the amount of nicotine in cigarettes, but only Congress could permanently ban them.

Congress Works to Increase Tobacco Tax

August 2 the U.S. Senate voted 68 to 31 to pass the Finance Committee's State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) package. The legislation calls for an increase in the federal tax on tobacco products, 61 cents on a pack of cigarettes and other increases on tobacco products, to help fund SCHIP. President Bush has threatened to veto the measure.

The House version of SCHIP reauthorization would increase the tax by 45 cents a pack and adjust some Medicare payments. The challenge now for the conference committee that will work to reconcile the differences will be to put together a bill that can get enough support in the House to overcome a Presidential veto.

Tobacco Message Reaches Youth

The Allen County 4-H Group hosted an extremely successful Battle of the Bands competition on July 28 in Iola. Even though forced to change the event location due to flood damage at the original site, a crowd of more than 500 people gathered to hear the *Smokeless Does Not Mean Harmless* message and listen to the five bands.

The 4-H Group is one of the many youth groups across the state working with a grant award from the Sunflower Foundation to increase awareness of the dangers of using spit tobacco.

Old Cigarette Ads on Exhibit

The Stanford School of Medicine has prepared an exhibit of old print cigarette and tobacco-related advertisements. Its intention is to tell the story of how, between the late 1920s and the early 1950s, tobacco companies used deceptive and often patently false claims in an effort to reassure the public of the safety of their products.

The exhibit, *Not a Cough in a Carload*, can be viewed on-line at <http://lane.stanford.edu/tobacco/index.html>

The exhibit, which will be at the school's Lane Library through September, provides the following description:

On first impression, most viewers will find these images outrageous, humorous, and so blatantly false as to trigger incredulity. But tobacco industry ad men also excelled in creative

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genius and had high levels of artistic skill. The best talent money could buy was recruited for this effort. Tobacco advertisers faced a daunting challenge: How do you sell a product which shortens the life of the user by an average of about eight years? In 2003, the tobacco companies brought to this task a war chest of over \$15 billion in advertising in the U.S. alone.

Constrained by governmental regulation and fears of litigation, tobacco marketing strategies have evolved over time from the (now) transparent hucksterism of the 1920-1950 era. Companies invest enormous resources into crafting clever and highly sophisticated devices to get their message across (witness Joe Camel and the Marlboro Man). The take home point is that little has changed from then to now, save for the subtlety of the methods employed.

Early in the last century, when questions about the health effects of smoking became a topic of widespread discussion, tobacco companies undertook a multi-faceted campaign to allay the public's fears. As terms like "smoker's cough" and "coffin nails" (referring to cigarettes) began to appear in the popular vernacular, tobacco marketers recognized the need to counter this threat to their livelihood.

One strategy was to use endorsements by healthy and vigorous appearing singers, Hollywood stars and elite athletes. Another was to raise fears over weight gain: "Reach for a Lucky instead of a sweet." Among the more reprehensible tactics was the utilization of the image of the noble and caring physician to sell cigarettes: Doctors were depicted both as satisfied and enthusiastic partakers of the smoking habit ("More Doctors Smoke Camels"). Images of medical men (and a few token women) appeared under soothing reassurances of the safety of smoking. Liberal use also was made of pseudo-scientific medical reports and surveys.

Tobacco Topics at the Fall Conference of KPHA

The Kansas Public Health Association will hold its annual fall conference in Wichita from September 18 to 20 this year. Tobacco-related topics on the agenda include:

- A plenary panel at 8:00 a.m. September 20 on *Strategies in Tobacco Control: Winning the Tobacco War* with TFKC former president Dr. Jon Hauxwell; Paula Marmet, director of the Office of Health Promotions at KDHE; Nicole Brown, Johnson County Health Department; and Linda DeCoursey, American Heart Association
- A breakout session at 3:30 p.m. September 19 on *Tobacco Cessation Treatment and Policy: New Horizons* with Kim Richter, Ed Ellerbeck and Won Choi
- A general session panel on public health advocacy at 10:30 a.m. on September 19 which includes Mary Jayne Hellebust, TFKC executive director

For more information and to register, go to http://www.kpha.us/documents/2007/2007_registration_brochure_on_web.rtf

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Other Registration Information

The **2007 National Conference on Tobacco or Health** will be held in Minneapolis, MN, **October 24-26**. For more information, click [here](#).

The 2007 **Spit Tobacco Summit** will be **August 29** at the Hutchinson Cosmosphere. The Summit is focused on youth, tobacco control advocates, oral health professionals, school nurses and anyone interested in making a difference about smokeless tobacco use in Kansas. One of the plenary speakers will be Gruen Von Behrens, who has survived thirty facial surgeries because of oral cancer caused by his use of spit tobacco as a teen.

Registrations are requested by August 15. For additional information, contact Becky Tuttle, KDHE, 316-337-6056, btuttle@kdhe.state.ks.us or the TFKC Web site.

Please share this newsletter with others interested in tobacco control in Kansas. The TFKC electronic newsletter will be distributed monthly to your e-mail. Please report a change of your e-mail address to TFKC .

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