

Tobacco Code of Practice for Health Professional Organisations

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In 2001, the Wonca Executive Committee passed a Call for Action on Tobacco Cessation. The Wonca Task Force on Tobacco Cessation developed an on-line survey for member organisations: www.globalfamilydoctor.com/tobacco/.

This voluntary benching survey was initiated in 2003–4 and will be repeated in 2007 as part of quality improvement process. This activity will help member organizations assess their strengths and needs, so that they can network and learn from one another. In 2004, Dr Michael Boland and I attended a WHO conference for Educational NGOs in Geneva. A Code of Practice was developed at this meeting, that was subsequently passed by the Wonca Executive. All member organizations are encouraged to do the same. This initiative is aligned with the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control that describes a comprehensive approach to addressing the global pandemic of tobacco abuse.

Unraveling the psychosocial genome of unhealthy habits will do more good for humankind than the mapping of the human genome. Motivational interventions that promote healthful behaviors must become more individualized than the 21st century advances in the drug treatment of diseases. To reverse today's behavioral epidemics, ecological and intersectoral approaches must work synergistically with consumer driven health care and the interests of business corporations to build grassroots movements that disseminate these behavioral innovations.

Code of practice on tobacco control for health professional organizations

In order to contribute actively to the reduction of tobacco consumption and include tobacco control in the public health agenda at national, regional and global levels, it is hereby agreed that health professional organizations will:

1. *Encourage and support their members to be role models by not using tobacco and by promoting a tobacco-free culture.*

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2. *Assess and address the tobacco consumption patterns and tobacco-control attitudes of their members through surveys and the introduction of appropriate policies.*
3. *Make their own organizations' premises and events tobacco-free and encourage their members to do the same.*
4. *Include tobacco control in the agenda of all relevant health-related congresses and conferences.*
5. *Advise their members to routinely ask patients and clients about tobacco consumption and exposure to tobacco smoke – using evidence-based approaches and best practices –, give advice on how to quit smoking and ensure appropriate follow-up of their cessation goals.*
6. *Influence health institutions and educational centres to include tobacco control in their health professionals' curricula, through continued education and other training programmes.*
7. *Actively participate in World No Tobacco Day every 31 May.*
8. *Refrain from accepting any kind of tobacco industry support – financial or otherwise –, and from investing in the tobacco industry, and encourage their members to do the same.*
9. *Ensure that their organization has a stated policy on any commercial or other kind of relationship with partners who interact with or have interests in the tobacco industry through a declaration of interest.*
10. *Prohibit the sale or promotion of tobacco products on their premises, and encourage their members to do the same.*
11. *Actively support governments in the process leading to signature, ratification and implementation of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control.*
12. *Dedicate financial and/or other resources to tobacco control – including dedicating resources to the implementation of this code of practice.*
14. *Participate in the tobacco-control activities of health professional networks.*
15. *Support campaigns for tobacco-free public places.*

Adopted and signed by the participants of the WHO Informal Meeting on Health Professionals and Tobacco Control; 28–30 January 2004; Geneva, Switzerland.