

AFTC (Advocacy Forum for Tobacco Control)

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Activities Coordinated by AFTC Delhi Secretariat: HRIDAY (January- February 15, 2009)

Accomplished activities:

January 2009

- **New Year greeting cards** with messages supportive of smoke-free public places and pictorial health warnings were sent to **MPs and state MLAs**. The following AFTC member organizations facilitated this activity in their respective states: Manbhumi Ananda Ashram Nityananda Trust (MANT, West Bengal), Swasthya (Haryana), National Organisation For Tobacco Eradication (Note India-Goa), Manbha Foundation (Meghalaya), Hepatitis Foundation of India (Tripura), Assam VHA, Sikkim VHA, Orissa VHA, Kerala VHS and VHA state level partners in: Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland and Jammu and Kashmir.
- **January 6:** A preliminary meeting was organized between HRIDAY, Public Health Foundation of India, The Union and representative of the **Indian Medical Parliamentarians Forum (IMPF)** and the Centre for Legislative Research and Advocacy to discuss AFTC's strategic plan of action for advocating with MPs on the issue of pictorial health warnings. It was proposed by IMPF to have an AFTC delegation make a presentation on health warnings in Parliament House. An update from IMPF is awaited. In addition, HRIDAY has provided a brief on pictorial health warnings for the inclusion in the IMPF newsletter.
- **January 12-14: Healis hosted a meeting of AFTC Regular Members** at Mumbai to discuss AFTC membership and future activities of AFTC. The minutes of the meeting have been drafted and outcomes will be shared with members shortly.
- **January 22: On behalf of AFTC, VHA and HRIDAY organized a press conference** in New Delhi on the issue of pictorial warnings in light of the news of a proposed GoM meeting. AFTC suspected further dilution or deferment of pictorial health warnings. This was the main focus of this press conference. A press release developed by HRIDAY, with inputs from AFTC members was released to the media. The GoM meeting was held on February 3. In the meeting different sections of COTPA and its provisions were discussed and no further decisions on health warnings were made.
- **January 28: HRIDAY sent appeals to the Prime Minister, Ms. Sonia Gandhi, and all GoM members**, urging not to further delay implementation of pictorial health warnings on tobacco products packages.

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- **Five new organizations have joined AFTC network.** These include: Navachar Sansthan (Rajasthan), Indian Asthma Care Society (Rajasthan), Academy of Management Studies (Uttarakhand), Chaukhamba (Uttarakhand) and Gujarat VHA.

State level capacity building workshop for NGO personnel and law enforcement officials:

January 9-10: Capacity building workshop organized for law enforcement officials and NGO personnel **in West Bengal (Kolkata)**, in collaboration with Manbhumi Ananda Ashram Nityananda Trust (MANT). AFTC resource persons included: Ms. Devika Chadha (Salaam Bombay Foundation), Ms. Tina Khanna (HRIDAY) and Ms. Priyanka Dahiya (HRIDAY).

No. of participants: Law enforcers: 46 (departments: health, education, police, and Labour) and NGO Personnel: 16



Legal Update on Ongoing Tobacco Control Litigation

January 23: The Delhi High Court struck down the Centre's October 2006 notification banning smoking scenes in films, saying onscreen smoking was part of an artist's creative license and allowed indirect advertising in the print media, saying that films and print media cannot be classified differently. This judgment was announced after a two-judge bench had given a split verdict last year on February 7, 2008 in a petition by Hindu Newspaper and film director Mahesh Bhatt challenging the curbs imposed by the Government. The Case has been disposed of by this judgment.

January 28: HRIDAY sent a press release opposing the Delhi High Court's decision to permit depiction of smoking scenes in movies. Feedback of AFTC members was included in the press release.

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February 1-15, 2009

- **February 2-3: On behalf of AFTC, HRIDAY organized the Second National Capacity Building Workshop for NGO Personnel on Tobacco Control** at New Delhi. 40 NGO personnel from 34 NGOs from 22 States and 1 Union Territory participated in the workshop. AFTC members who participated as resource persons in the workshop include: Dr. K. Srinath Reddy, Ms. Monika Arora, Ms. Radhika Shrivastav, Ms. Priyanka Dahiya, Mr. Amit Yadav and Ms. Tina Khanna (HRIDAY), Dr. PC Gupta and Dr. Karthik Subbaraman (Healis), Dr. Subhadra Menon (PHFI), Mr. Anant Christian (Faith Foundation), Mr. Ashutosh Singh (India Media Centre for Journalists), Mr. Saju. V. Itty (Kerala VHS) and Dr. Mira Aghi. Other resource persons for the workshop were: Dr. Jagdish Kaur (MOHFW), Mr. Pranay Lal (The Union), Ms. Vineet Munish Gill (WHO India), Dr. Bhavesh Modi (Government of Gujarat) and Ms. Rachita Bansal (Lawyers Collective).



- **February 10: On behalf of AFTC, PHFI and HRIDAY organized a Workshop on Worksite Wellness: Focus on Smoke-free Workplaces for Corporate Managers and Medical Officers at New Delhi.** This workshop was organized in partnership with Confederation of Indian Industry, World Economic Forum, The Union and American Cancer Society. Representatives from 26 corporate houses participated in the workshop. The resource persons from AFTC for the workshop were: Dr. K. Srinath Reddy and Dr. Manu Mathur (PHFI), Ms. Monika Arora (HRIDAY), Dr. Rakesh Gupta (American Cancer Society & Rajasthan Cancer Society), Ms. Devika Chadha

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(Salaam Bombay Foundation. Other resource persons for the workshop were: Dr. Shaloo Puri Kamble (World Economic Forum), Ms. Catherine Jo (American Cancer Society), Dr. Nevin Wilson and Mr. Pranay Lal (The Union) and Dr. Ranga (The Hindu). The resource kit on “Worksite Wellness: Smoke-free Workplaces” and posters on smoke-free workplaces were developed by HRIDAY in consultation with AFTC partners. The resource kit and the posters were given to workshop participants.

Proposed Activities for February-March 2009

- Finalization of strategy for state level situational analysis for law enforcement officials and NGOs to gauge enforcement of provisions of the Indian Tobacco Control Act, 2003.
- AFTC meeting to be held during the 14th WCTOH on March 10 from 4:30pm to 5:30pm.
- PHFI and HRIDAY are organizing a symposium on “Worksite Wellness Initiative: Promoting Smoke-free Workplaces in India” in collaboration with World Economic Forum and American Cancer Society, on March 9, 2009 during the 14th WCTOH. CEOs of the corporate houses will be invited for this symposium.
- Release of “A Handbook of Effective Strategies on Tobacco Control Advocacy for NGO Personnel”.
- State level advocacy activities to be undertaken in partnership with AFTC members. 10 proposals have been received till date. The proposals are being screened at HRIDAY and will then be forwarded for review to AFTC members who volunteered.
- State level capacity building workshops in Jammu and Kashmir and Maharashtra (proposed).