



## Global Tobacco Control: What the U.S. Can Learn from Other Countries

### Executive Summary

This document summarizes the key findings from the Tobacco Control Legal Consortium's law synopsis, *Global Tobacco Control: What the U.S. Can Learn from Other Countries*,<sup>1</sup> found at [www.publichealthlawcenter.org](http://www.publichealthlawcenter.org).

### Introduction

Although tobacco use is decreasing in the United States, globally the tobacco epidemic kills nearly six million people each year. The Consortium's law synopsis summarizes ten different tobacco control policy strategies in effect around the world as of June 30, 2013. Each section describes the particular strategy and includes information on:

- Where it's happening: which countries are implementing the strategy;
- Opposition to the particular strategy (usually from the tobacco industry);
- Unintended consequences or challenges in implementing the strategy; and
- Impact: information on the strategy's effectiveness as a public health measure.

### Global Tobacco Control Strategies: Highlights from Around the World

#### 1. Graphic Health Warnings

- The number of countries adopting picture-based health warnings for tobacco packages is rising rapidly, with approximately 50 countries mandating pictorial warnings.
- In Uruguay, pictorial warning labels must cover 80% of the front and back of the package.

#### 2. Plain Packaging Requirements

- Australia is the first country to require plain packaging, prohibiting tobacco logos, brands, and colors leaving a "plain" package with the product name and the health warnings.

#### 3. Comprehensive Advertising Limits

- As of 2010, 19 countries had comprehensive laws to fully prevent tobacco industry marketing tactics.
- For example, Panama prohibits tobacco advertising on TV, in newspapers and magazines, on the internet, at the point of sale, and through the mail. Tobacco sponsorship and payments for product placement are also prohibited.

#### 4. Point of Sale Advertising Limits

- More than 50 countries completely prohibit advertising at the point of sale, including Ireland, New Zealand, Norway, Spain, Thailand, Turkey, and Venezuela.
- A handful of countries have passed laws to prohibit visible pack displays. Ireland's display prohibition includes the label, container, wrapper or package used for the product.

<sup>1</sup> The full document, published Sept. 2013, contains citations for the information in this Executive Summary.

## 5. Smoke-free Laws

- According to the World Health Organization (WHO), 31 countries have comprehensive smoke-free laws as of 2010.
- Visitors and residents of countries such as Panama, Spain, and Uruguay can enjoy 100% smoke-free indoor public places such as bars, restaurants, and even casinos.

## 6. Tobacco Taxes

- In the United Kingdom, tobacco taxes are 77% of the retail price of cigarettes. Between 1992 and 2011, the price of cigarettes increased more than 200%. Adult smoking prevalence dropped from 27% in 2000 to 20% in 2010.

## 7. Comprehensive Laws

- Some countries have taken a comprehensive approach to tobacco control. For example, Thailand has a comprehensive law that requires smoke-free public places and workplaces (with limited exceptions); extensive limits on tobacco marketing, including a ban on point-of-sale advertising; and graphic health warnings on 55% of the front and back of each cigarette package.
- Comprehensive laws also can be found in Uruguay, Turkey, Ireland, and New Zealand.

## 8. Regulating the Tobacco Product

- Canada requires periodic emissions testing and emissions disclosures of tobacco products and it requires tobacco companies to measure and report cigarette emissions data.
- A related idea is to prohibit the sale of certain types of tobacco or nicotine products. Brazil and Chile prohibit the use of menthol and other flavorings. Brazil and Singapore prohibit the sale of e-cigarettes.

## 9. Controlling Tobacco Industry Interference

- As encouraged by Article 5.3 of the FCTC, many countries are taking steps to minimize or eliminate tobacco industry interference in public health efforts. For example, Kenya, Latvia, and Lebanon all have laws prohibiting the tobacco industry from participating in tobacco control policy development.

## 10. Novel Ideas: Age-of-birth Cutoff

- Some countries are considering novel approaches to reduce or eliminate tobacco use (for example, prohibiting the sale of cigarettes to those born after a set date, such as 2000).
- Although no country has adopted this strategy yet, the Australian state of Tasmania is considering age-of-birth cutoff laws, as are Singapore and Finland.

### Framework Convention on Tobacco Control

In 2005, the world's first public health treaty — the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) — was adopted. The FCTC was negotiated under the World Health Organization (WHO) and to date more than 170 countries have become parties. This paper references the FCTC provisions when relevant; however, it is not limited to strategies required by the FCTC.

## Conclusion

Although smoking rates are down in the U.S., the tobacco industry continues to market its products actively to new and existing consumers. Other countries have achieved dramatic success in reducing the demand for tobacco products by adopting laws that are much stronger than those in the U.S.