

NACCHO Board Agenda Form (Resolution)

Agenda Item II-D

Meeting Date: November 7, 2004

Name of Submitter: Mark Horton, MD, MSPH
Chair, Environmental Health and Prevention Advisory Committee

Name of Item: **Resolution to Support Healthy International Trade Policy**

Strategic Objective:

- 1.2:** Expand public health practice to include land use planning and support the integration of environmental health with other public health practices.
- 1.4:** Provide information on significant emerging issues and trends among local, state, federal, and tribal agencies and other organizations.
- 2.2:** Establish relationships with disciplines and systems (e.g., education, social work, land use, transportation, economic planning, criminal justice, civil and human rights organizations, etc.) to develop collaborative strategies to eliminate health inequities.

Action Requested (include language of motion and/or attach resolution):

Consent agenda with passage, or, if pulled from Consent Agenda, motion and second to approve the attached resolution.

Background Information:

The EH Advisory Committee has been discussing this issue since Fall 2003. Due to the potential impact of international trade agreements on health, the committee saw the need for a policy statement recommending specific action items aimed at mitigating the degree to which these agreements negatively affect both the ability of the local health officer to effectively perform his or her job responsibilities, and the public's health.

Suggested Uses for Resolution:

- By NACCHO staff, in responding to requests from partner organizations to engage on an issue related to international trade.
- By LHOs, as a framework for assessing the impact of international trade agreements on local public health programs and policies.

Impact of Resolution or Issue on Health Equity:

This resolution aims to ensure that GATS, NAFTA and other international trade agreements do not limit public health agencies from supporting laws, rules and regulations that protect the public's health and natural resources, and prevent discrimination. As currently implemented, these agreements may interfere with the ability of state and local authorities to enact or enforce policies that protect public health and promote health equity.

Item Reviewed by: Advisory Committee Executive Committee Staff

Res. 04-XX

RESOLUTION TO SUPPORT HEALTHY INTERNATIONAL TRADE POLICY

WHEREAS, the GATS (General Agreement on Trade Services), the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and similar trade agreements have placed economic and financial interests above health and have preempted a wide range of US laws, rules, policies and programs that protect or enhance the public's health and safety; including those related to tobacco control, the environment, food safety, and occupational safety and health; the affordability of vital human services, and the integrity of the ecosystem¹; and

WHEREAS, the process for negotiations for these agreements (including the current Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) and others under negotiation) does not clearly prioritize the public's health and fails to include input from the public health and environmental community; and

WHEREAS, the World Trade Organization, based on these trade agreements, has overturned government decisions that protect the environment and public health but conflict with a nation's trade interests;²

WHEREAS, such actions resulting from these trade agreements can have a direct impact on public health services and the ability to protect and improve the public's health at the local level; and

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) advocate for policies, programs, and communication strategies that ensure that the public's health is not compromised in the pursuit of economic interests; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that NACCHO supports an assessment of the impact of GATS, the FTAA and similar agreements on the public's health, and, based on such assessments, supports modifications ensuring that these agreements do not have an adverse impact on the public's health; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that NACCHO supports the exclusion of vital health and human services, such as personal health and public health services, and the exclusion of critical natural public resources such as safe food and water, clean air, and reliable energy, from trade negotiations and challenge under these agreements; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that NACCHO supports beneficial trade controls on toxic chemicals and substances, and other trade policies designed to minimize environmental risk; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that NACCHO supports the inclusion of public health representatives in the negotiating process as well as transparency and accountability at all levels of trade negotiations. Specifically, NACCHO supports appropriate representation on appointed trade tribunals and in all trade negotiations to ensure that regulatory protections and the enforcement of standards regarding health, vital human services, and the environment enacted by Congress, state, regional, or local health authority,-are not compromised.

*Proposed by Environmental Health and Prevention Advisory Committee
November, 2004*

Notes

1. American Public Health Association, "International Trade Agreements: Priorities for Health," (WFPHA Position Paper) Washington, DC: APHA, 2001; see also, American Medical Association House of Delegates, Resolution 219, "Elevating Health Concerns in International Trade Agreements," (Draft, 2003); Ellen Shaffer and Joe Brenner, "Trade and Health: Corporatizing Vital Human Services," in Mary Anne Mercer, Meredith Fort, and Oscar Gish (eds.) *Sickness and Wealth* (Boston: South End Press, 2004); Ronald Labonte, "Globalization, Trade and Health: Unpacking the Links and Defining Public Policy Options," in Richard Hofrichter (ed.) *Health and Social Justice: Politics, Ideology, and Inequity in the Distribution of Disease* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2003): 469-500.
2. L. Wallach and M. Sforza, *The WTO: Five Years of Reasons to Resist Corporate Globalization* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 1999).