

CPATH ♦ Center for Policy Analysis on Trade and Health

Bringing a Public Health Voice to Trade and Sustainable Development

Medicine and Public Health Groups Oppose U.S. Trans-Pacific Partnership Threats to Tobacco Control, Affordable Medicines AMA, AAP, ACPM, AMSA, CPATH Call for New Direction in Trade Talks September 15, 2011

The [American Medical Association](#) and specialty medical groups for [Pediatrics](#), [Preventive Medicine](#) and [Medical Students](#) joined the [Center for Policy Analysis on Trade and Health \(CPATH\)](#) and other public health experts calling on trade officials to reverse course and protect health, as trade officials from the U.S. and eight other Pacific Rim nations gathered this week in Chicago to set the terms for a new Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) trade deal.

Dr. Ellen R. Shaffer, PhD MPH, Co-Director of CPATH, stated, "Trade rules make deadly tobacco products cheaper and easier to sell, but life-saving prescription drugs more expensive. We call on the U.S. Trade Representative to create a 21st century trade agreement that protects health: 1. Exclude tobacco and tobacco products from the TPP. 2. Support access to affordable medicines."

Shaffer added, "The drug and tobacco industries are relying on secret trade talks to trump public opinion and prop up their failing business models. The U.S. public and Congress are very clear: we support tobacco controls and affordable medicines. These life and death proposals must be discussed in the light of day." Proposed text of the agreements is not publicly disclosed, and the Chicago meeting itself was not announced publicly until after it was underway.

Current TPP negotiating partners include Australia, Brunei Darussalam, New Zealand, Singapore, Malaysia, Vietnam, Chile, and Peru, with the objective of including additional countries throughout the Asia-Pacific region.

Reverse Past Trade Deals That Undermine Tobacco Control

Tobacco use is the leading preventable cause of death and disease in the world, accounting for 5.2 million deaths each year, including 438,000 in the U.S. Seventy per cent of the deaths occur in low and middle income nations. Trade rules make tobacco products cheaper by eliminating tariffs.

The U.S. and other countries have turned to limits on ad campaigns that target younger people, and to graphic warning labels, that encourage adult smokers to quit. Phillip Morris International has used trade rules to file charges against these effective tobacco control measures, claiming they interfere with their intellectual property rights.

Transparent Medicines Policy

The pharmaceutical industry is also turning to secret trade deals to prop up profits as their blockbuster drugs go off patent. [CPATH's research](#) established that intellectual property rules in the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) raised medicine prices in Guatemala by up to 856%. The Australia-U.S. Free Trade Agreement authorized [drug company intrusions](#) into Australia's cost-effective drug purchasing system, resulting in increased prices for statins ([see also P Randal](#)).

The U.S. Trade Representative released a [vaguely worded statement](#) describing its proposed policy at the meeting. "These policies mean life or death to millions. Congress and the public deserve the same access to the policy process that drug companies now enjoy," according to Dr. Shaffer.