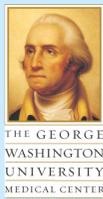


Advocating for tobacco-free pharmacies: Past and current efforts



Vinayak M. Jha, MD and Alan Blum, MD
The George Washington University and The University of Alabama



Introduction

There are more than 56,000 pharmacies in the United States. Most (39,000+) of these pharmacies are owned and operated by national pharmacy corporations, supermarkets, or discount stores; and almost all of them still sell tobacco products. This is in stark contrast to the 17,000 independents, most of which long ago stopped selling tobacco.

Pharmacy corporations claim to care about your health, but ...

They Still Sell Tobacco



Fig 1. Historical advertisement for cigars in the Saturday Evening Post, featuring Rexall Drug Company Vice President. The Rexall company in the 1950's was the largest drugstore franchise in the United States.



Fig 2. Image of the electronic billboard at a CVS/pharmacy advertising a carton of Marlboro cigarettes



Fig 3. CVS/pharmacy promotes blood pressure and cholesterol screening so that customers can "jump-start [their] journey to a healthier heart." [Screenshot 2012]



Fig 4. Some CVS/pharmacy stores operate a "Minute Clinic," in which clinicians see patients. [Screenshot 2012]

CVS/pharmacy Sells Tobacco



Fig 5. Photo from NY Times (10/21/11) that described Walgreens pharmacists "out from behind the counter," thereby more easily able to counsel customers.

Walgreens Sells Tobacco

Sick bedfellows



and



"Walgreens is proud to be a sponsor of The American Heart Association and the Heart Walk across the state of Florida. **We promote healthy and well living and certainly the Heart Walk promotes both.**"

- Marlin Hutchens, a Vice President at Walgreens

Fig 6. Direct quotation taken from heartwalk.org, a website of the American Heart Association [accessed Feb 2012]

Walgreens Sells Tobacco

Tobacco sales in pharmacies:

- Represent a conflict of interest acknowledged even by the pharmacy corporations
- Make it difficult for pharmacists to credibly counsel smoking cessation since the establishment for which they work sells tobacco products
- Implicitly associate tobacco products with good health and contribute to the normalization of its use
- Account for > 4% of all cigarettes sold in USA
- Occur primarily in chain pharmacies, rather than in independent pharmacies

Highlights in the struggle against pharmacy tobacco sales

- 1971**
American Pharmacists Association adopts statement that pharmacies should not sell tobacco
- 1985**
Doctors Ought to Care (DOC) calls for an end to pharmacy tobacco sales in "Pharmacists who dispense cigarettes" (*NY State J of Medicine* 1985; 85:350-353)
- 1993**
Ontario Canada passes legislation prohibiting tobacco sales in health facilities (incl. pharmacies)
- 1995**
The California Medical Association Foundation launches its Pharmacy Partnership Project (in 2000 this became Prescription for Change)
- 2004**
WHO Informal Meeting adopts statement that health professionals will "prohibit the sale or promotion of tobacco products on their premises"
- 2008**
San Francisco and Boston are the first cities in USA to ban tobacco sales in pharmacies
- 2010**
 - Saskatchewan province in Canada passes ban. Only two provinces - British Columbia and Manitoba still permit tobacco sales in pharmacies.
 - San Francisco expands its ban to include larger establishments that operate pharmacies, such as grocery stores and department stores
- 2012**
Twenty-five cities and towns in the state of Massachusetts have pharmacy tobacco sales bans

TobaccofreeRx

An organization of pharmacists, pharmacy school and medical school faculty, pharmacy students, nurses, physicians and medical students, attorneys, and health advocates whose goal is to end the sale of tobacco products in pharmacies.

Various strategies are employed:

- Lobby for legislative bans
- Expose the hypocrisy of the pharmacy corporations
- Expose inaction by insurance companies
- Advocate for differential reimbursement of pharmacies by insurance companies, depending on whether they sell tobacco products or not
- Raise tobacco retailer license fees for health care facilities that choose to sell tobacco
- Counter-advertising:

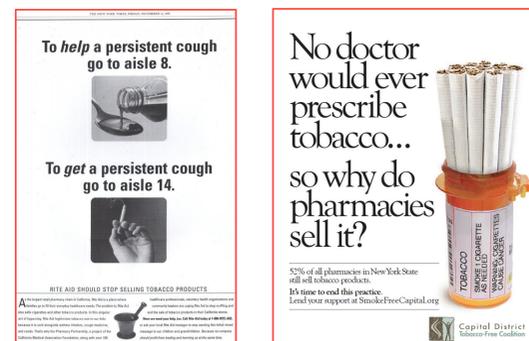


Fig 7. (a) Full page advertisement taken out in the Nov 12, 1999 New York Times, led by the Pharmacy Partnership of the California Medical Association Foundation. (b) Public messaging by the Capital District Tobacco-Free Coalition of New York State.



Fig 8. Your Cancer Center and Drug Store. Satirical exhibit of a drug store in which every display and advertisement promotes tobacco. The exhibit debuted at the National Conference on Tobacco or Health in June 2009 in Phoenix, Arizona.

Conclusions

- Nearly fifty years after the landmark 1964 Surgeon General's Report on Smoking and Health, cigarettes remain the leading preventable cause of cancer and heart disease. Yet incredibly, most US pharmacies still sell cigarettes.
- Ending pharmacy tobacco sales will decrease its availability and contribute to de-normalizing its use.

About this poster

- For presentation at the World Conference on Tobacco or Health, Singapore, March 23, 2012. Abstract #D3-P239.
- The following are registered trademarks of their respective corporations or organizations: CVS/pharmacy logo (CVS/Caremark corporation), Walgreens/The Pharmacy America Trusts (Walgreens Co), AHA/Learn and Live (AHA). The website screenshots or logos of Safeway, CVS/pharmacy, Walgreens, and the American Heart Association should not imply their endorsement of or participation in this work.
- The contributions of our Board of Advisors of TobaccofreeRx and of Julia Purpera is gratefully acknowledged. For info, please see TobaccofreeRx.org