Action on Smoking and Health: 50 Years–Turning the Tide in the Tobacco War
1967-2017

Dedicated to ZERO Tobacco Deaths

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ASH is committed to a world where no one dies because of tobacco use.
When ASH was first established in 1967, cigarettes and their accompanying smoke were part of the backdrop of our daily lives. Few regulations were in place in the United States or around the world to protect us from the marketing tactics of the tobacco industry or from exposure to tobacco smoke. As a result, close to half of the population smoked, and the other half was forced to inhale tobacco smoke against their will at work, in public places, and when traveling.

I still remember one particular bus ride in the 70’s, when I was a child. I was sitting across the aisle from a young mother who was holding her baby on her lap. Typical for that time in history, she and a few other passengers were smoking one cigarette after the other. The air in the bus was so polluted that I tried to open a small latch window to let some fresh air in, and the smoking mother said, “Close that window immediately, don’t you see I have a baby with me.” There I was, a preteen prone to asthma and respiratory infections, feeling ashamed for wanting to breathe smoke-free air. There were a number of victims in this instance: the nicotine addicted mother, her baby, me, the driver, and the other passengers who were forced to breathe secondhand smoke. That was the norm half a century ago, and this picture repeated itself many times throughout my life.

Indeed, much has changed in the last 50 years since the inception of ASH. Thanks to ASH, the Federal Communications Commission ruled in 1977 that the Fairness Doctrine applied to cigarette commercials, which in turn led to the prohibition of cigarette advertising on radio and television by 1971; then smoking was banned from airplanes in 1990; the 1998 tobacco Master Settlement Agreement led to further restrictions in the advertising, marketing and promotion of tobacco products in the United States; the global tobacco treaty — the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control — entered into force in 2005 setting a global standard on how to prevent the tobacco epidemic; the 2009 Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act granted the Food and Drug Administration the right to regulate tobacco; the world recognized that tobacco is a threat to development when the United Nations General Assembly included tobacco in the 2030 UN Agenda for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); and lifesaving policies such as smoke-free environments, advertising bans, increasing the price of cigarettes, and standardized packaging have been gaining ground all around the world in recent years. ASH is proud to have been part of these and many other public health victories. Thanks to these successes, most of us are no longer assaulted by tobacco smoke on a daily basis, cigarettes are no longer as much a part of our daily lives as they were in the 60’s, and smoking prevalence among adults and children has fallen to its lowest levels in more than a half a century.

As a result of these successes, many of us, particularly here in the United States or in high-income countries, may think that tobacco is a problem that has already been solved, out of sight, out of mind. While we must celebrate the public health gains, unfortunately our fight for health over big tobacco is not over yet. The tobacco epidemic is still raging, killing more than 7 million people each year, with most of these deaths occurring in low-income countries or among the most vulnerable populations in high-income countries.

The tobacco epidemic is still raging, killing more than 7 million people each year, with most of these deaths occurring in low-income countries or among the most vulnerable populations in high-income countries. In addition, smoking costs the global economy almost 2% of its GDP, totaling more than 1.4 trillion dollars per year; this is equivalent to the GDP of Canada, the 10th wealthiest country in the world. Tobacco companies continue to produce, market, and mass distribute cigarettes, an addictive and defective product that kills at least half of its consumers when used as intended. In 1954, the then Vice President of Philip Morris said, “If we had any thought or knowledge that in any way we were selling a product harmful to consumers, we would stop business tomorrow.” Today, everyone acknowledges that nicotine is addictive and cigarettes are harmful, but business is continuing as usual. It continues to be a ubiquitous product that can be purchased almost everywhere, from airplanes, convenience stores, gas stations, and many other places. In the United States, tobacco retailers are almost as common as ATMs.

ASH will continue to work tirelessly until we achieve a smoke-free future. My hope is that by the end of the 21st century cigarettes will no longer be around, and no one will have to die because of tobacco.
Where We Were: Tobacco Embedded in Daily Life

ASH was formed in 1967 as a reaction to society’s lackluster response to the 1964 Surgeon General report linking smoking to disease. At the time, smoking was entrenched in every aspect of life. Cigarette companies sponsored cartoons on television, children made their parents ashtrays in art class, all public places — even hospitals — were filled with smoke, and asking someone to refrain from smoking was socially unacceptable. Few could imagine a world where cigarettes were not everywhere.

When the Surgeon General announced that smoking causes cancer, it was big news.

ASH Board Chair Dr. Alfred Munzer was an early warrior in the tobacco fight.

Part of the tobacco industry’s marketing strategy was to produce toys for children.

The military was and still is one of the prime targets of tobacco advertising.

Cigarette smoke once filled nearly every public space. Sadly, in some places this is still true.

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Where We’ve Been: The Battles Fought

ASH got to work to build a world without smoking. Our first big win came quickly, after an ASH lawsuit forced broadcasters to give free air time to anti-tobacco messages. This led to the Federal Cigarette Labeling and Advertising Act, banning tobacco ads on radio and television. ASH has continued its role as the vanguard of public health policy, pushing for smokefree air, smokefree airplanes, the international tobacco treaty, exemptions for tobacco regulations in trade agreements, and many other initiatives.

Smoking ban on flights world-wide

MONTREAL: The International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) has adopted a resolution banning smoking on all commercial airlines’ international flights, starting July 1996.

Canada and Australia had been seeking the smoking ban as of 1994 in a draft resolution they presented to the ICAO Assembly, which has been meeting at the organisation’s headquarters in Montreal for its 29th session. But the two countries later supported a compromise resolution setting the July 1995 ban date.

David Wightman, the head of the Canadian delegation, said he was “entirely satisfied” with the resolution adopted and added that, in any case, for Canada, the date had been negotiable.

The ICAO does not set civil aviation rules directly for its 173 member states, but the resolutions it adopts are taken into account by individual governments in drawing up their own regulations.

—AFP

ASH tracks the industry’s political donations and worked hard to remove tobacco money from universities.

ASH staff leading a flash mob in New York City with Jeff the Diseased Lung (from the John Oliver show on HBO).

ASH led the development of the FCA, which has grown to over 500 organizations from more than 100 countries.

Through the Framework Convention Alliance (FCA), ASH worked with the WHO to establish the FCTC and continues to support the implementation of its global best practices.

The WHO FCTC entered into force in 2005 and has been ratified by 181 countries.

ASH was instrumental in ensuring that tobacco is included in UN development work.

WHO FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON TOBACCO CONTROL

ASH Action on Smoking & Health

Presenting to DC Mayor Bowser on the harms of tobacco use in the DC community, particularly the difference in prevalence rates by ward — with Mayor Bowser, D.C. Department of Health, and Teens Who Don’t at John A. Wilson Building.

Action on Smoking & Health

Certified 33 colleges, urials as “Free from Tobacco Money” including @UCBerkeley/SH@Buff.ly/Tobidown

Framework Convention Alliance

Founded by Marty Logan — 5 hrs

Huge thanks to ASH: Action on Smoking & Health Executive Director Lauren Huber and the team for their years of support as FCA’s Secretariat!

FCA’s new ED, Franco Thomass, and the entire FCA team are looking forward to continued cooperation with ASH from their new Secretariat at HealthBridge.
WASHINGTON, OCT.5, 2015/PRNewswire/ – In a major victory for public health, negotiations for the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) Agreement concluded this morning with built-in protections to prevent private corporations from suing governments over anti-tobacco regulations. The victory comes after years of pressure from a vast coalition of health groups and pro-health legislators, including Action on Smoking and Health (ASH), to protect the rights of governments to regulate tobacco without fear of expensive lawsuits. The tobacco industry, along with its allies in the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and other groups, fought hard to ensure that overseas marketing of tobacco products – the only consumer product to kill when used as intended – could continue unabated.

Where We Are:
At the Forefront

In many ways, 2017 looks very different from 1967. Most Americans live in places where they will not be exposed to secondhand smoke when they go out. The percentage of adults who smoke has fallen by two-thirds. Tobacco companies can no longer use cartoons and billboards to market to children. But the tobacco epidemic is far from over. One-fifth of all deaths in the U.S. are still due to cigarettes. Smoking has become a disease of the poor and marginalized, groups that can least afford the consequences.

ASH and UnfairTobacco led a campaign with 123 signatories demanding Philip Morris International immediately cease the marketing and production of cigarettes.

ASH runs ongoing communications campaigns to remind the public that the tobacco wars are not yet over.

The fight is more than smoke-free air. It’s stopping the Tobacco epidemic.
ASH has a proven track record of pursuing undeveloped, innovative concepts and turning them into groundbreaking programs that improve health for all. ASH works as an incubator and catalyst for new ideas in the tobacco control field to change minds, build safeguards for health and lay the groundwork for a tobacco-free future.

As we move forward on this path, we will continue to drive down tobacco use prevalence through global best practices and exploring new channels to continue the discussion on the commercial sale of tobacco products as well as options for holding the industry criminally liable for the harm they cause.

ASH is grateful to our generous donors located all across the country and in some cases, around the world. They come from all walks of life, from doctors to teachers, authors to musicians, students to entrepreneurs, and the retired—and every single one plays a critical role in our work. We are grateful for every pledge, whether a large annual donation, recurring monthly gift, or support to a sign-on letter. No support goes unnoticed.

ASH NEWS
Tell us why you support the fight against Big Tobacco:
Email your story to hq@ash.org, and we might feature you on our website (ash.org/why-i-fight/) and social media.

ASH NEWS
Make a donation:
Let us know that you support the work ASH is doing by making a donation through www.ash.org/donate.

ASH NEWS
Stay informed:
Get the latest ASH News and anti-tobacco happenings by signing up for our email updates through a request to hq@ash.org.

ASH NEWS
Tell your friends!
There’s a reason why you stand with ASH in support of health. Let your friends, family and colleagues know why the work we do at ASH is important to you.

ASH NEWS
Share our website, social media, or this report with them:
www.ash.org
@ASHGlobalAction
@ASHorg

Where We’re Going: The Path to Zero Tobacco Deaths
ASH has a new goal: to put ourselves out of business. The world cannot afford another half century of needless death, and we cannot allow ASH to celebrate its 100th anniversary. It is time for society to reconsider how it treats a product that kills more than half of its consumers. ASH will lead from the frontline to demand an end to the tobacco epidemic.

Join the movement.
As we capitalize on past victories and hope to gain new ones, we recognize that the fight is far from over. If you are interested in joining the movement, here’s what you can do:

Tell your friends!
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@ASHorg

ASH NEWS
Tell us why you support the fight against Big Tobacco:
Email your story to hq@ash.org, and we might feature you on our website (ash.org/why-i-fight/) and social media.

ASH NEWS
Make a donation:
Let us know that you support the work ASH is doing by making a donation through www.ash.org/donate.

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Stay informed:
Get the latest ASH News and anti-tobacco happenings by signing up for our email updates through a request to hq@ash.org.

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