

New APhA policy takes stand against tobacco sales

Building on three decades of Association policy, 2010 stance is strongest yet

At the 2010 APhA House of Delegates, the Association passed its strongest policy ever regarding the sale of tobacco products in pharmacies and in facilities that include pharmacies. The policy, proposed as a new business item by delegate Daniel Hussar, PharmD, of the Philadelphia College of Pharmacy at the University of the Sciences in Philadelphia, urges pharmacies to discontinue tobacco sales and advises federal and state governments, state boards of pharmacy, colleges of pharmacy, and the Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education, in addition to pharmacists and student pharmacists, to exert their influence to help discontinue tobacco sales in pharmacies.

A caring profession

This new APhA policy expands and extends previous Association policies discouraging tobacco sales in pharmacies dating from 1971 and 2005 to constitute what Tom Menighan, BPharm, MBA, ScD, APhA Executive Vice President and CEO, called APhA's strongest position on the issue to date and a move in tune with pharmacy's status as a caring profession.

"APhA's policy reflects a belief that removing tobacco sales from pharmacies will enhance the credibility of pharmacists as health care providers and pharmacies as health care destinations. Furthermore, removing tobacco products enables pharmacists to provide patient care services such as disease management and smoking cessation without professional conflict. Finally, implementing this policy will position pharmacists clearly as health care providers within

the public health community and with other health care providers," Menighan said. "Each practice site and practitioner should consider their own position on this issue," he noted.

APhA's policy echoes that of other health profession organizations, such as the American Medical Association (AMA), which has also pushed to remove tobacco products from pharmacies. Tobacco cessation is included as part of AMA's Healthy Lifestyles Initiative. Since 2003, official American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy (AACP) policy has urged pharmacies to discontinue sales of cigarettes and tobacco products. AACP policy also encourages member schools of pharmacy to "encourage students ... to include the sale of cigarettes and other tobacco products among the factors to be considered in their employment decisions" and to "give preference to those pharmacies that do not sell cigarettes and other tobacco products" for internship and practice experience sites.

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Inspired by 'long-standing concern'

Hussar told *Pharmacy Today* that he hopes this new policy will have a positive effect on the practice of pharmacy.



APhA policy on the sale of tobacco products in pharmacies

- Urges pharmacies and facilities that include pharmacies to discontinue the sale of tobacco products.
- Urges the federal government and state governments to limit participation in government-funded prescription programs to pharmacies that do not sell tobacco products.
- Urges state boards of pharmacy to discontinue issuing and renewing licenses to pharmacies that sell tobacco products and to pharmacies that are in facilities that sell tobacco products.
- Urges colleges of pharmacy to only use pharmacies that do not sell tobacco products as experience sites for their patients.
- Urges the Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education to adopt the position that college-administered pharmacy experience programs should only use pharmacies that do not sell tobacco products.
- Urges pharmacists and student pharmacists who are seeking employment opportunities to first consider positions in pharmacies that do not sell tobacco products.

"I've had a long-standing concern that tobacco products that are so well documented to cause major medical problems and death are being sold in pharmacies that want to be known for their products and services that promote and improve health," Hussar said. "I think there is [now] a basic recognition that selling tobacco products is not consistent with the image of a health professional."

"I think the House of Delegates was positioned to speak for a much larger group of pharmacists than were convened in the House," Hussar added. "I think it is important for the profession's national association to take a strong stand and then to follow up on it."

—Alex Egervary