



# Commonwealth Dental Association

*Working for Oral Health in the Commonwealth*

## The Commonwealth Oral Tobacco Cessation Statement

*The Commonwealth Health Ministers Meeting (CHMM 2006) has unanimously approved and adopted the CDA's "Commonwealth Oral Tobacco Cessation Statement". The Statement reads as follows:*

Cigarettes are by far the dominant form of tobacco used worldwide, however, in countries like India chewing tobacco represents over a third of all tobacco consumed. Smokeless tobacco delivers nicotine and is dependence forming. It causes considerable health risks; in particular it is a major cause of oral cancer. Recent evidence has demonstrated substantial amounts of tobacco specific nitrosamines (TSNAs) in smokeless tobacco products. TSNAs are the most common carcinogens in unburnt tobacco which are formed during the ageing, curing and fermentation of tobacco.

Smokeless tobacco products vary considerably and, in an unregulated environment, it is difficult for professionals and members of the public to know the contents of the different forms of chewing tobacco.

Health Professionals have a fundamental role to play in tobacco control and members of the dental team can play a special role in that process. Dental professionals have the opportunity to help people change their behaviour and they can give advice, guidance and answers to questions related to the consequences of tobacco use in general and oral tobacco in particular.

Members of the dental team should, therefore, be encouraged and trained to play a predominant role in preventive measures, especially when considering the youth. They have the opportunity to promote social norm change, and forewarn children and adolescents of the dangers of oral tobacco.

Dental health professionals should themselves be the example that a healthy society reflects upon. Many associations and establishments have started - and should continue - to designate their own workplaces as smoke- and tobacco-free. Dental students should be trained in tobacco control during their educational years and so become more efficient at identifying and treating patients in tobacco-related issues, and are able to act as informers that can prevent tobacco use and can support their patients cessation efforts. Adding tobacco control as a component of the training and education programme of all dental health professionals is important.

Commonwealth Health Ministers:

- ◆ Recognise the dangers of smokeless tobacco within the general tobacco control programme and the role that members of the dental team can play in prevention and tobacco cessation.
- ◆ Request the collaboration, support of governments, international bodies (e.g WHO, FDI, CDA, PAHO) and other agencies to:
  - (1) Establish [an appropriate](#) leadership centre and an international network in oral tobacco cessation
  - (2) Develop suitable training programmes for members of the dental team to facilitate tobacco cessation
  - (3) Encourage National Dental Associations to have policies on tobacco free work places and training programmes within pre-registration course
  - (4) Provide support for the development of national programmes on preventing oral cancer
  - (5) Work with the global child dental health taskforce and the WHO Collaborating Centre at Kings College London to monitor and evaluate the progress of the above.

**Approved and Adopted by the Commonwealth Health Ministers  
Commonwealth Health Ministers Meeting  
Geneva, Switzerland  
21 May 2006**