From Clinician to Health Promoter

Prof. Prakit Vathesatogkit, M.D., FRCP

Action on Smoking and Health Foundation, Thailand
Advisor to ThaiHealth
Advisor to The International Network for Health Promotion Foundations
1986 Dean of Mahidol University: “Prakit can learn how to do it”
The Team
1986
My first press conference

Cigarette smoke causes fatal lung collapse

by Sanjitsudh Ekecha

"GOOD, now you can go to heaven sooner.
That is the only thing physician Dr. Praktit Wathwetangki can say to his patients who suffer from breathing difficulty yet still won't give up smoking.
"It's already too late to quit when the symptoms appear. The damage is done. But not quitting at all can certainly send you to heaven sooner," says the chest disease specialist Dr. Praktit, an associate professor at the Pulmonary Division, Ramathibodi Hospital.

Left: Dr. Praktit Wathwetangki:
"Imagine panting, gasping for breath all the time."

A patient suffering from chronic bronchitis, now totally dependent on an oxygen mask.

A former smoking "champion" who boasted of using only one match in the morning to begin his chain-smoking day is now one of Dr. Praktit's patients.

Mr. Chuan Joonget of Lop Buri, who made headlines a few years back, was kept in an intensive care unit for three weeks. And after a few years of treatment, he within 10 years of the first stage of coughing. This percentage rises to 70 per cent if the patients go for treatment at the stage of gasping for breath.

"We need to be afraid of lung cancer the most when talking about smoking. People still know little about this breathing torture which is actually more severe and takes more lives."

In the US where statistics are more readily available, one in five smoking people suffer from chronic bronchitis. Of those one per cent or 1.5 million people become disabled, he says.

Among the causes of premature
1987-1989 First Thing’s First: Must get rid of tobacco ads
1989-1991
Trade threat from USA

Testify at USTR public hearing against US tobacco export policy
1992 Working with Parliament to pass two tobacco control laws
1993
Advocacy/ Lobby for tobacco tax increase

Prepare the evidences
Prepare the policy brief
Informing the public
The link to MOPH
Achieving Political Support
Problem faced in 1990s

Unable to secure adequate budget for tobacco control

Beside tobacco control

There are other problems such as

- Alcohol related problems
- Road safety (traffic accidents)

Facing the same problem as tobacco control: no funding
1994-1996
Bowling fund raising
How to obtain budget for Tobacco Control / Health Promotion (1994 - 1996)

Research for advocacy

Advocacy and lobbying
1996 Took Rhonda Galbally, CEO of VicHealth

To meet with Dr. Surakiart Sathiriranthanhai, Minister of Finance to advocate for a health promotion fund similar to VicHealth
Health financing reform policy (1996) (MoF and MoPH)

Appointed 2 Working Groups to Study:

1. Universal Health Insurance Coverage,
   - to provide health security

2. Setting up a Health Promotion Institute / Foundation
   - to fund health promotion programs

This was intended to be pushed as a package
1999
Cabinet endorse ThaiHealth bill

The Deputy Minister
MOF

The Prime Minister
Parliament approved

2001  ThaiHealth Promotion Foundation Act

2002  The National Health Security Act “Universal Health Insurance”
Health Promotion Foundation Act 2001

- Establishing Thai Health Promotion Foundation as an autonomous state agency
- Requiring 2% of alcohol and tobacco surcharged taxes to this fund
Surcharge Tax for ThaiHealth Budget

2012 Budget = 120 million USD
Expanded Network
All Funded by Thai Health

• Action on Smoking and Health 1986
• Office of Tobacco Control MOH 1991
• Thailand Health Promotion Institute 1991

• Thai Health Promotion Foundation 2001
• Tobacco Control Research Center 2005
• Health Professional Network Against Tobacco 2005
• Teacher Network Against Tobacco 2005
• National Quit line 2009
Mass media campaign funded by ThaiHealth

Series: Public Park (Why do you hurt me?)
Target Audiences: Non-Smokers / Second-hand smoker
Central idea: Smoking in public places is hurting others
VicHealth, 1987
HealthWay, 1991
SwissHealth, 1994
AustriaHealth, 1996
Singapore, 2001
Taiwan Health Promotion Administration, 2001
ThaiHealth, 2001
If Thailand can, So can we

Malaysian Health 2007
Mongolian Health 2007
Tonga Health 2007
Korea Health 2011
Vietnam Tobacco Control Fund 2013
Laos Tobacco Control Fund 2013
Samoa 2013?

More to come...
International Network for Health Promotion Foundations
The 21st IUHPE World Conference
Thailand’s new regulation

Effective October 2, 2013
Each carton must contain cigarette pack with 10 different Pictorial Warnings
Filed lawsuit against MoPH and Requested for

1. Court injunction
2. Court to rule that the law is illegal
June 26, 2013

Dear Minister Pradit.

The fact that the industries took the case to court means that you are doing the right thing. Please be assured that the public is behind you.

Being a minister of health, there is nothing for which you can be more proud than being sued by the tobacco industry,

Prof. Prakit Vathesatogkit, M.D.
A war room was established to support MOH
Tobacco label push stalls

Court finds faults in health warning changes

POST REPORTERS

The Central Administrative Court has ordered the Public Health Ministry to suspend the enforcement of a cigarette health warning enlargement regulation in a high-profile case filed by tobacco giant Philip Morris against the ministry.

The company yesterday hailed the court’s decision, handed down on Friday.

Philip Morris lodged a complaint with the court on June 26, asking it to issue an injunction suspending the enforcement of a new regulation requiring tobacco warning labels to cover 85% of the total visible packaging surface, up from 55% at the moment. It also asked for the regulation, which was to take effect on Oct 2, to be scrapped.

The plaintiff claimed the ministry acted beyond its legal powers and failed to consult thousands of retailers and manufacturers in violation of due process requirements. It also claims the measure substantially impairs the ability of manufacturers and importers to use their trademarks to differentiate their products from those of competitors.

Further, Philip Morris says the regulation is unnecessary given that the risks associated with smoking are well known.

The requirement for each 10-pack carton to contain 10 different warning images would impose a hefty burden on tobacco producers as packaging technology now does not support such design diversification, the company says.

During the court hearing, the ministry argued the regulation was in line with the World Health Organisation’s (WHO) Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, which supports the use of health warnings to prevent the young and non-smokers from trying tobacco products.

The National Tobacco Control Board has also resolved that on-package health warnings are the most effective means of reminding consumers of the dangers of smoking, the ministry said.

Regarding the diversification of health warning images on cigarette cartons, the ministry has already agreed to give tobacco firms another 180 days from Oct 2 to adjust packaging machines.

The court concluded the hearing last month and ruled on Friday for the regulation’s enforcement to be suspended.

The court said the regulation has problems regarding its legality and would cause excessive burdens on the plaintiff once it is put into force.

“The regulation contains several legal problems that need to be considered,” the court said.

The problems include clarifying the reason behind the enlargement of the health warning labels; whether the regulation will cause an excessive burden on the plaintiff; whether the ministry has thoroughly weighed the benefit of the regulation for public health protection against the damages that may be caused to the plaintiff; and if the ministry has listened to opinions from affected parties.

“The fact that the ministry has extended the enforcement of package diversification for 180 days shows that the regulation is deemed impractical,” the court said.

The court ruled the enforcement of the regulation be delayed until a final judgement is made.

Philip Morris yesterday hailed the court’s decision, “We welcome the court’s recognition that this regulation should be suspended until this case is considered on its merits, and we are grateful to the court,” Onanong Prataphiriyaw, manager of the company’s communications and external affairs, said.

“The decision now clears the way for us to show this measure is not only illegal but also unnecessary given that the health risks of smoking are universally known in Thailand,” she said.

The Public Health Ministry had earlier insisted the ministry has a legal right to enforce this packaging regulation.

The WHO’s Framework Convention on Tobacco Control allows public health ministries to implement measures without getting feedback from tobacco traders, the ministry says.
5.30 PM 27 August, 2013

Dear Minister Pradit,

I hope you are in good spirit,

the war is not over yet.

No sensible person will be so elegantly jubilant that they can obstruct a measure to save lives.

We support your cause.
And the War Continues!
Thank you all for your support!