



Office of the Dean

Statement on the Foundation for a Smoke-Free World

January 25, 2018

On September 13, 2017, it was announced that Philip Morris International plans to contribute close to \$1 billion to fund an organization to be known as the Foundation for a Smoke-Free World. The Foundation has the stated mission of reducing illness and death from smoking and lists as its priorities: supporting research on harm reduction and smoking cessation, identifying the right interventions, monitoring industry actions, and preparing tobacco farmers for a future of reduced demand.

As deans of the nation's top schools of public health, we are announcing today that, after considering numerous factors and scientific best practices, our schools are **not** accepting funding from or pursuing work with this Foundation.

The World Health Organization and other organizations that support smoking prevention and tobacco control efforts in the United States and around the [world have pledged not to work with](#) the Foundation for a Smoke-Free World. This position is a result of the Foundation's close association with an industry and a company whose products have killed millions of people around the world. Further, both the tobacco industry and Philip Morris International have a long history of funding "research" in ways meant to purposely confuse the public and advance their own interests, aggressively market cigarettes globally, including to children, and persist in their relentless opposition to evidence-based tobacco control interventions. [The Framework Convention on Tobacco Control](#)—the world's first public health treaty—states, "There is a fundamental and irreconcilable conflict between the tobacco industry's interests and public health policy interests." If Philip Morris really wished to establish a "smoke-free world" they would stop legal challenges to local and national tobacco control efforts and cease advertising and manufacturing cigarettes.

Recently, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration proposed [a framework for regulating](#) nicotine that holds tremendous potential, as well as potential risks, for public health. Recognizing that nicotine is addictive, it is imperative that public health regulation of nicotine products is based upon strong scientific evidence and astute judgment. Success in saving millions of lives will depend on research and policy development untainted by the interests of the tobacco industry.

It has been [suggested by the CEO of the Foundation that](#) the Foundation's bylaws and structure meet [standards for use of industry funds published by leaders](#) in the tobacco control field. This assertion is untrue. Major differences include a lack of transparency about how the research agenda was established and the public relations benefits realized by Philip Morris International, even as it increases its marketing of products that predictably will continue to kill millions of people around the world. The relationship of the organization to its funding is also an important distinction. An illustrative comparison is with the Legacy Foundation (now [Truth Initiative](#)). Following a settlement of state-initiated litigation, the tobacco industry was legally required to make payments to Legacy, and the industry did not control any aspect of how these funds were used.

Our schools of public health consider funding from the Foundation for a Smoke-Free World to be equivalent to funding from the tobacco industry and, as a result, we are not collaborating with the Foundation.

As more details become clear, we will seek answers to several questions to determine whether to consider revisiting this position. These questions include:

- How is the research agenda established, including whether prevention of nicotine addiction and tobacco use is considered;
- Whether there is an impermeable firewall between Philip Morris International and the Foundation;
- How Philip Morris International will use the Foundation for its own benefit; and
- How Philip Morris demonstrates a true commitment to meaningful change as a company, including (1) a specific timeline and milestones for phasing out advertising of cigarettes and cigarettes themselves; and, (2) the immediate cessation of activities hostile to the policies advanced by the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control.

Sincerely,

Alphabetical order by University

Kue Young, MD, DPhil
Dean
School of Public Health
University of Alberta, Canada

Jonathan M. Samet, MD, MS
Dean
Colorado School of Public Health
University of Colorado | Colorado State University | University of Northern Colorado

Tomás R. Guilarte, PhD
Dean
Robert Stempel College of Public Health & Social Work
Florida International University

Michelle A. Williams, ScD
Dean
Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health
Harvard University

Wayne H. Giles, MD, MS
Dean
School of Public Health
University of Illinois at Chicago

Paul K. Halverson, DrPH, MHSA, FACHE
Founding Dean
Richard M. Fairbanks School of Public Health
Indiana University

Ellen J. MacKenzie, PhD, MSc
Dean

Bloomberg School of Public Health
Johns Hopkins University

Donna Arnett, PhD, MSPH
Dean
College of Public Health
University of Kentucky

Helen Hopp Marshak, PhD, MCHES
Dean
School of Public Health
Loma Linda University

Boris D. Lushniak, MD, MPH
Dean
School of Public Health
University of Maryland

John R. Finnegan, Jr., PhD
Dean
School of Public Health
University of Minnesota

William J. Martin, MD
Dean
College of Public Health
Ohio State University

Perry N. Halkitis, PhD, MS, MPH
Dean
School of Public Health
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey

G. Thomas Chandler, MS, PhD
Dean

Norman J. Arnold School of Public Health
University of South Carolina

Pierre Buekens, MD, MPH, PhD
Dean
School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine
Tulane University

Jeffrey H. Coben, MD
Dean
School of Public Health
West Virginia University

Ronald A. Perez, PhD
Interim Dean
Joseph J. Zilber School of Public Health
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

 January 26, 2018

PREVIOUS

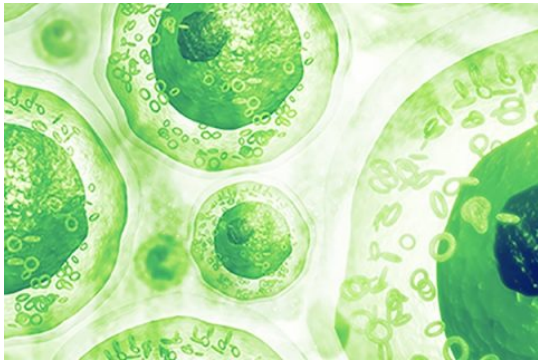
[Statement on Sexual Harassment & Assault](#)

NEXT

[New Harvard President](#)

News from the School

[When cells reach their breaking point](#)



Sex, drugs & mosquitoes



Medicaid work requirements sow confusion



Eric Rubin named editor-in-chief of New England Journal of Medicine

Copyright © 2019 The President and Fellows of Harvard College

☺