



COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION  
REGIONAL OFFICE III



CHEDRO-III MEMORANDUM  
No. 125, series of 2024

For : ALL PRESIDENTS/HEADS/OFFICERS-IN-CHARGE OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS (HEIs) IN REGION III

Subject : POLICY ADVISORY ON SCHOOL-BASED SMOKING PREVENTION PROGRAMS

Date : June 28, 2024

This Office endorses the subject undertaking "**Policy Advisory on School Based Smoking Prevention Programs**" by the Commission on Human Rights, which addresses the urgent public health concern of rising tobacco and e-cigarette use among teenagers, particularly those aged 13-15 years.

The Global Youth Tobacco Survey highlights that a significant percentage of high school students and e-cigarette products are exposed to tobacco smoke in enclosed public places. This trend necessitates immediate and effective interventions within educational settings to safeguard the health and well-being of our youth. The following comprehensive approaches are recommended:

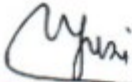
1. Enhancement of educational programs that provide students with knowledge about the dangers of smoking and strategies to resist peer pressure;
2. Strict enforcement of no-smoking policies within school premises;
3. Provision of support services for students struggling with nicotine addiction;
4. Integration of smoking prevention education in school curricula, and;
5. Collaboration with healthcare professionals and community organizations to create a supportive environment for students.

In view hereof, all Higher Education Institutions in Region III are requested to download the copy of the Policy Advisory of the Commission on Human rights through the link below and provide CHEDRO III feedback on the adoption of said policy.

[https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1aSYWR4wW\\_F872FMRDWAd1SFy7sO1gdlk](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1aSYWR4wW_F872FMRDWAd1SFy7sO1gdlk)

Should there be any queries/clarifications and for further details about the event, please coordinate with Atty. Aloi Renz P. Santos of the Commission on Human Rights through email at [arpsantos@chr.gov.ph](mailto:arpsantos@chr.gov.ph).

Wide dissemination of this memorandum is desired.

  
DR. LORA L. YUSI  
Director IV



REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES  
COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS  
**POLICY ADVISORY**  
CHR (III) ADV05142024-002  
**ON SCHOOL-BASED SMOKING  
PREVENTION PROGRAMS**

### INTRODUCTION

The Philippines faces a critical public health concern: a sharp increase in tobacco and e-cigarette use among teenagers, especially 13-15 year old in high school. The said survey revealed that in 6,670 eligible high school students in grade 7-10 surveyed, 13% (*1 in every 8 students*) currently used any tobacco products and 14.1% (*1 in every 7 students*) of which currently used e-cigarette, while 41.7% (*1 in every 2 students*) were exposed to tobacco smoke inside enclosed public places (Global Youth Tobacco Survey 2019, p. 1). This trend demands a swift and strategic response. Existing school-based smoking prevention programs, while present, are evidently falling short. This policy advisory calls for a reevaluation of these programs and proposes significant improvements based on both legal analysis and successful practices observed internationally.

The rights of these children to the “highest attainable standard of health” are of utmost importance for promoting and safeguarding (Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989, Article 24 (1)). This emphasizes the need for resource allocation,

CHR ng lahat: Naglilingkod maging sino ka man

Diosdado Macapagal Government Center, Brgy. Mainpis, City of San Fernando, Pampanga

Tel Nos. (043) 404-6631 / (043) 961-4830; (+63) 919-054-3390

international collaboration, accountability, and involvement of civil society in advocating for and safeguarding the rights of all children. In addition, the Philippine Constitution “recognizes the vital role of the youth in nation-building and shall promote and protect their physical, moral, spiritual, intellectual, and social well-being.” (Article II, Section 13), emphasizing the importance of prioritizing rights and welfare of young people, as they are crucial to both human rights and the development of the nation. By supporting initiatives that empower and educate the youth, encourage their participation in civic activities, and ensure their safety, the government is working towards creating a society that is fair, inclusive, and built to last.

The Republic Act 9211, commonly known as the Tobacco Regulation Act of 2003, governs different aspects of tobacco use and trade. This law prohibits selling tobacco products to anyone- under 18 years old, protecting young people's health. It also regulate-s public smoking and limits advertising of tobacco items. The law also provides for education programs regarding the adverse effects of smoking. The Act encompasses comprehensive- tobacco legislation for the nation. It establishes guidelines for buying, selling, and promoting tobacco goods, and education initiatives of anti-smoking. The legal age restriction prevents youth access to these products. Additionally, it enforces limitations on smoking in public spaces and tobacco advertising. According to the study conducted by Gonzales (2023) of the Philippine Pediatric Society (PPS), teenagers, even those younger, are now easily lured into vaping and this would make them susceptible to different kinds of diseases that lead

CHR ng lahat: Naglilingkod maging sino ka man

Diosdado Macapagal Government Center, Bgy. Maimpis, City of San Fernando, Pampanga

Tel Nos. (045) 404-6631 – (045) 961-4830

to preventable deaths. These results showcase- shifting patterns among youth. More minors find e-cigarettes accessible and appealing over tobacco products. The data points to the rise- of e-cigarette usage- among underage individuals.

To effectively address this issue, a multi-fold approach is necessary. This policy advisory proposes a comprehensive city ordinance to bolster existing legislation and ensure consistent program implementation. Additionally, it recommends adapting successful prevention programs from countries like the US and Taiwan to the Philippine context. These programs often incorporate elements like peer education, social marketing campaigns, and life skills training, addressing the social and psychological factors that can lead to tobacco use.

### **Current Legislative Environment**

Republic Act No. 9211 provides a comprehensive legal structure for tobacco control but lacks emphasis on proactive prevention strategies within schools. The findings suggest a need for stricter implementation strategies that prioritize educational interventions alongside cessation.

### **The Implementation of Laws in Educational Settings**

The current legislation, while establishing a structure for tobacco control, fails to provide comprehensive guidelines for preventative programs. This deficiency hinders effective program implementation within schools. Consequently, schools might lack the necessary resources to comprehensively address the intricate issues surrounding tobacco use by minors. This potential shortfall could create gaps in

CHR ng lahat: Naglilingkod maging sino ka man

Diosdado Macapagal Government Center, Brgy. Maimpis, City of San Fernando, Pampanga

Tel Nos. (045) 404-6611 – (045) 961-4830

proactive preventative efforts, leaving students susceptible to the detrimental effects of tobacco and e-cigarette use.

### **Lack of explicit focus on proactive prevention strategies**

Implementing proactive smoking prevention strategies in schools requires a multifaceted approach that includes education, policy enforcement, and support systems. While many schools may have educational programs in place, there's often a lack of consistent enforcement of no-smoking policies and limited access to resources for students struggling with nicotine addiction. Additionally, preventive measures should extend beyond mere education to include counseling services, peer support groups, and collaboration with community organizations to create a comprehensive support network for students at risk of or already engaging in smoking behaviors. Without such holistic approaches, efforts to prevent smoking in schools may fall short of effectively addressing the issue.

### **Variable Implementation Across Schools**

The effectiveness of smoking prevention programs in educational institutions varies due to inconsistent application of the law. Some schools might strictly enforce anti-smoking policies, while others might not be as diligent. This inconsistency creates mixed messages for students and undermines the overall effectiveness of prevention efforts. Without uniform enforcement and adherence to regulations, the impact of these programs is diminished, leaving students potentially exposed to harmful behaviors.

CHR ng lahat: Naglilingkod maging sino ka man

Diosdado Macapagal Government Center, Brgy. Mainpis, City of San Fernando, Pampanga

Tel Nos. (045) 404-6631 – (045) 961-4830

### **Lack of Comprehensive Curricular Integration**

Integrating smoking-related health education into school curricula is crucial for raising student awareness and influencing their behavior towards healthier choices. However, the current lack of full integration diminishes the potential impact of such education. By embedding these lessons into the curriculum, schools can effectively reach and educate students about the risks of smoking, empowering them to make informed decisions and prioritize their health.

### **Feasibility and Necessity of a Comprehensive Approach**

To effectively address this issue, a multifaceted approach is necessary. A comprehensive city ordinance can help existing legislation and ensure consistent program implementation across schools. This ordinance is feasible as it leverages existing legal frameworks like Republic Act No. 9211, which provides a structure for tobacco control. Strengthening the implementation of these frameworks is necessary to prioritize educational prevention alongside cessation efforts.

### **Benefits of a Multifaceted Solution**

Adapting successful prevention programs from countries like the US and Taiwan can significantly benefit the Philippines. These programs often incorporate elements like peer education, social marketing campaigns, and life skills training, addressing the social and psychological factors that can lead to tobacco use. Implementing such a program is not only feasible but also highly beneficial. It equips

CHR ng lahat: Naglilingkod maging sino ka man

Diosdado Macapagal Government Center, Brgy. Maimpis, City of San Fernando, Pampanga

Tel Nos. (045) 404-6631 – (045) 961-4830

students with the knowledge and skills to resist peer pressure and make informed decisions about their health.

By prioritizing prevention and implementing a standardized curriculum, a significant reduction in tobacco use and initiation among minors can be achieved. This translates to improved public health outcomes and a healthier future generation. Moreover, fostering collaboration among stakeholders, including government agencies, non-profit organizations, healthcare professionals, educators, parents, and students themselves, is crucial for the success of these initiatives. This collaborative approach is feasible due to the shared interest in protecting public health. By pooling resources and expertise, stakeholders can develop and implement effective strategies that address the root causes of tobacco use among Filipino youth.

## CONCLUSION

The policy advisory highlights a critical gap in tobacco control efforts within educational settings in the Philippines, highlighting the pressing need for a more proactive approach. Strengthening legal mandates is crucial to provide clear guidelines and consequences regarding tobacco use on school premises. By enforcing strict no-smoking policies and implementing disciplinary measures for violations, schools can create a healthier and safer environment for students. Additionally, enhancing curricular content to include comprehensive education on the dangers of tobacco use, addiction mechanisms, and strategies for prevention can empower students with the knowledge and skills to make informed decisions about their health. Integrating such

CHR ng lahat: Naglilingkod maging sino ka man

Diosdado Macapagal Government Center, Brgy. Maampis, City of San Fernando, Pampanga

Tel Nos. (045) 404-6631 - (045) 961-4830

education into existing subjects like science, health, and even social studies can ensure widespread coverage and long-term impact.

Moreover, fostering collaborative efforts among various stakeholders is essential for the success of tobacco control initiatives in educational settings. This collaboration can involve government agencies, non-profit organizations, healthcare professionals, educators, parents, and students themselves. By pooling resources, expertise, and influence, these stakeholders can work together to develop and implement holistic strategies that address the root causes of tobacco use among Filipino youth. Such efforts might include organizing awareness campaigns, providing cessation support services, and advocating for stronger tobacco control policies at local and national levels. By harnessing the collective efforts of diverse stakeholders, there is significant potential to not only reduce tobacco use among Filipino youth but also mitigate the associated health risks and create a culture of wellness and prevention within educational settings across the country.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **General Public**

Public awareness campaigns are essential to educate both parents and learners about the detrimental effects of smoking and the critical need for intervention. Leveraging various communication mediums such as television, radio, print media, and social media platforms allows for widespread dissemination of information. Integrating social media influencers within the city adds a contemporary touch,

*CHR ng lahat: Naglilingkod maging sino ka man*

Diosdado Macapagal Government Center, Brgy. Maimpis, City of San Fernando, Pampanga

Tel Nos. (045) 404-6631 – (045) 961-4830



reaching younger audiences who are particularly susceptible to tobacco advertising. These campaigns can highlight the immediate and long-term health consequences of smoking, dispelling myths and misconceptions while underscoring the importance of prevention and cessation efforts. By engaging diverse channels and influencers, these campaigns can effectively resonate with the public, inspiring individuals to take proactive steps towards a smoke-free lifestyle and fostering a community-wide commitment to combating tobacco use.

### **Students**

To effectively combat the pervasive issue of smoking, it is imperative to mandate the integration of comprehensive smoking prevention education into school curricula across all grade levels. This initiative would entail providing teachers with specialized training and access to evidence-based resources, equipping them to deliver impactful lessons that inform students about the dangers of smoking and empower them with the knowledge and skills to resist peer pressure and make informed choices about their health. By embedding smoking prevention education within the academic framework, schools can play a crucial role in fostering a generation of informed and resilient individuals who are equipped to make healthy lifestyle choices and contribute to the overall well-being of society.

### **Educational Institution and Teachers**

Implementing and rigorously enforcing school policies to prohibit smoking on school premises and during school-sponsored events is paramount to fostering a

CHR ng lahat: Naglilingkod maging sino ka man

Diosdado Macapagal Government Center, Brgy. Maimpis, City of San Fernando, Pampanga

Tel Nos. (045) 404-6631 – (045) 961-4830

healthy and conducive learning environment. These policies should be accompanied by clear disciplinary measures for students found smoking, thereby emphasizing the seriousness of the issue and deterring such behavior. Moreover, it's essential to offer robust support services for students struggling with nicotine addiction, ranging from counseling and educational resources to cessation programs. By taking a comprehensive approach that combines prevention, enforcement, and support, schools can not only safeguard the well-being of their students but also instill lifelong habits of health and responsibility.

### **Healthcare Professionals**

Active participation of healthcare professionals in school-based smoking prevention programs is paramount for fostering a healthier generation. By providing their expertise, resources, and support services, healthcare professionals can significantly enhance the effectiveness of these programs. Collaboration between schools and healthcare facilities ensures a comprehensive approach to prevention and cessation support for students, addressing both the educational and medical aspects of tobacco use. This synergy not only equips students with valuable knowledge and skills to resist smoking initiation but also offers crucial support for those already struggling with addiction. Through this collaboration, healthcare professionals and educators can create a supportive environment that empowers students to make informed, healthy choices, ultimately leading to a tobacco-free future for the next generation.

CHR ng lahat: Naglilingkod maging sino ka man

Diosdado Macapagal Government Center, Brgy. Mainpís, City of San Fernando, Pampanga

Tel Nos. (045) 404-6631 – (045) 961-4830

## **Local Government Unit**

To fortify smoking prevention programs, there is an urgent need to strengthen the implementation guidelines. Acknowledging this imperative, this Regional Office have proactively drafted a sample Malolos City Ordinance. This proposed order serves as a practical tool to enhance the execution of smoking preventive programs. By offering clear directives and guidelines, the city ordinance order aims to streamline efforts and ensure the effective implementation of preventive measures. Additionally, it underscores the Regional Office's dedication to promoting public health and combating tobacco use, providing a tangible framework for action. Therefore, policymakers can significantly advance smoking prevention initiatives and protect community health by adopting and implementing this Malolos City Ordinance. (Refer to the attached document, "*An Order Establishing A Comprehensive Tobacco And E-Cigarette Prevention Program For Educational Institutions Within Malolos City.*").

## **Legislators**

Advocating for legislation supporting school-based smoking prevention programs at various governmental levels is pivotal in safeguarding the health of future generations. By advocating for funding mandates, policymakers can ensure that these programs receive the necessary resources to effectively reach students. Implementing smoke-free policies in schools not only creates environments conducive to health but also sets positive examples for students. Additionally, regulations on tobacco advertising and marketing targeted at youth are essential to counteract the pervasive influence of the tobacco industry. Such legislation not only protects young people

CHR ng lahat: Naglilingkod maging sino ka man

Diosdado Macapagal Government Center, Brgy. Maimpis, City of San Fernando, Pampanga

Tel Nos. (045) 404-6631 – (045) 961-4830

from the harmful effects of tobacco but also reinforces the importance of prioritizing public health in policy making. Through coordinated efforts at the local, state, and national levels, policymakers can create an environment where school-based smoking prevention programs thrive, ultimately contributing to the reduction of tobacco use among youth and the promotion of healthier communities.

### **Implementation Strategy**

The implementation of a standardized curriculum and the establishment of robust monitoring mechanisms are pivotal steps towards tracking the effectiveness of tobacco control programs. Through this, we aim to achieve a tangible reduction in tobacco use and initiation among minors. Continuous evaluation and adjustment of these programs based on feedback and research findings will be paramount in ensuring their ongoing relevance and impact.

This Regional Office believes that the thrust of every government agency and office is to equally provide every Filipino a quality, efficient, and accessible health promotion and protection, especially among the youth, and in the protection of everyone's fundamental rights.

*City of Malolos, Bulacan, 14th day of May, 2024*

Recommended by:

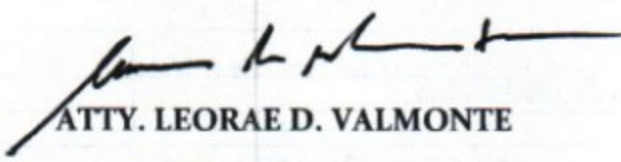
  
**ATTY. ALOI RENZ P. SANTOS**  
Attorney IV

CHR ng lahat: Naglilingkod maging sino ka man

Diosdado Macapagal Government Center, Brgy. Maimpts, City of San Fernando, Pampanga

Tel Nos. (045) 404-6631 - (045) 961-4830

Approved by:



**ATTY. LEORAE D. VALMONTE**

Regional Director

CHR ng lahat: Naglilingkod maging sino ka man

Diosdado Macapagal Government Center, Brgy. Maimpis, City of San Fernando, Pampanga

Tel Nos. (045) 404-6631 - (045) 961-4830

## REFERENCES

Global Youth Tobacco Survey, Tobacco Fact Sheet (2019). *GYTS was conducted in 2019 by the Epidemiology Bureau of the Department of Health in coordination with the Department of Education and Centers for Health Development.*

[who.int](http://who.int)

Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (1989).

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-rights-child>

Philippine Constitution, (1987). *Article II Declaration of Principles and State Policies, Sec. 13*

[The Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines | Official Gazette of the Republic of the Philippines](#)

Republic Act No. 9211 (2003). *AN ACT REGULATING THE PACKAGING, USE, SALE, DISTRIBUTION AND ADVERTISEMENTS OF TOBACCO PRODUCTS AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.*

<https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/2003/06/23/republic-act-no-9211/>

Philippine News Agency (2024). *Experts warn of youth lung injury crisis due to vaping.*

[Experts warn of youth lung injury crisis due to vaping | Philippine News Agency \(pna.gov.ph\)](#)

Republic Act No. 11900 (2020). *AN ACT REGULATING THE IMPORTATION, MANUFACTURE, DISTRIBUTION, USE, AND SALE, PACKAGING, COMMUNICATION OF VAPORIZED NICOTINE AND NON-NICOTINE PRODUCTS, AND NOVEL TOBACCO PRODUCTS.*

[ra 11900.pdf \(senate.gov.ph\)](#)

Malolos City Ordinance No. 19-2023, (2023). *Regulating The Use of Tobacco Products.*

[O 19 2023.pdf \(maloloscity.gov.ph\)](#)

Flay, B. R. (2009). *The promise of long-term effectiveness of school-based smoking prevention programs: A critical review of reviews.* Tobacco induced diseases.

[School-based smoking prevention programs with the promise of long-term effects - PubMed \(nih.gov\)](#)

**CHR ng lahat: Naglilingkod maging sino ka man**

---

Diosdado Macapagal Government Center, Brgy. Mainpilis, City of San Fernando, Pampanga

Tel Nos. (045) 404-6631 – (045) 961-4830

Linnansaari, A., Schreuders, M., Kunst, A.E. *et al.* *Understanding school staff members' enforcement of school tobacco policies to achieve tobacco-free school: a realist review.* *Syst Rev* 8, 177 (2019).

<https://doi.org/10.1186/s13643-019-1086-5>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2019). *Current tobacco use among middle and high school students - United States*

[Current tobacco use among middle and high school students-- United States, 2011 - PubMed \(nih.gov\)](#)

WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control & World Health Organization (2005). *WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC).*

<https://fctc.who.int/publications/i/item/9241591013>

Melanie A. Wakefield, Barbara Loken, and Robert C. Hornik. *Use of Mass Media Campaigns to Change Health Behavior* (2010).

[https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(10\)60809-4/abstract](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(10)60809-4/abstract)

---

CHR ng lahat: Naglilingkod maging sino ka man

Diosdado Macapagal Government Center, Brgy. Maimpis, City of San Fernando, Pampanga

Tel Nos. (045) 404-6631 – (045) 961-4830