



VIET NAM PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION

NewsLetter

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Public health network enhanced - Community health improved

HIGHLIGHT ACTIVITIES

Strengthening the enforcement of the smoke-free policy



Recently, the Provincial Public Health Associations (PPHAs) in Khanh Hoa, Ha Tinh, Hue and Dong Thap province have organized workshops to strengthen enforcement of smoke - free policies in each province. This is one of the efforts of the Vietnam Public Health Association (VPHA) and the PPHAs to enhance the awareness and determination of all leading levels and departments in establishing and implementing smoke-free policies in the provinces.

Attend these workshops in the provinces were representatives of the VPHA, PPHAs, leaders representing the provincial

People's Committee, and representatives of the World Health Organization, the local Departments, and unions. At the workshop in each province, the delegates heard presentations on the harmful effects of smoking and passive smoking, the local tobacco control operations, Article 8 of the Framework Convention on preventing harmful effects of tobacco, and the program "Strengthening the enforcement of the smoke-free policy in Vietnam through VPHA's network." In Hue, a representative of the provincial People's Committee presented the expected establishment of the Steering Committee of Hue, issuing the policy implementing the Smoke-free policy in Hue City. The PPHA in Khanh Hoa disseminated the plan of implenting tobacco control activities in the province of the Health, Education and Transportation sector, and establishing provincial tobacco control committee.

Through workshops, Provincial leaders highly appreciated the project activities at localities and provided with a number of inputs to finalize to action plans.

Workshop on strengthening the implementation and enforcement of smoke-free policy have been organized in each province that has increased awareness and commitment of the provincial leaders, the heads of tobacco control related departments, creating favorable conditions for deploying effectively the smoke-free policies in each locality.

Share experiences in the International Conference on Realising The Rights to Health and Development for all

On October 26th-29th 2009, representatives of the VPHA presented at the International Conference titled "Realising The Rights to Health and Development for all," organized by the Central Commission for Popularization and Education and the Initiative on Health and Human Rights Organization - University of New South Wales (Australia) in Hanoi.

More than 260 Vietnamese and international delegates including scientists and social activists specializing in the field of health, development and human rights attended the workshop. The main issues of discussion included:

HIV/AIDS, threats to public health, maternal and children health, climate change, economic globalization



At the workshop, Ms. Nguyen Ngoc Bich - Coordinator of VPHA presented on VPHA's experience in the implementation of smoke-free policies in 6 provinces in the three regions of Vietnam. In addition, Ms. Tran Thi Tuyet Hanh, Project Coordinator of the preventing dioxin transmission through food project, shared experiences in implementing practices to ensure the rights of people living in Dong Nai hotspots. The two presentations of the VPHA have received much attention of public health researchers and advocacy, not only in Vietnam but also around the world.

As a result of this workshop, international experts have acknowledged "the efforts of Vietnam in ensuring human rights, including the access to health care services". These are regarded as experiences that should be shared.

In Brief

The Dong Thap Public Health Association organized a training workshop to strengthen the enforcement of smoke-free policy in Vietnam for provincial health workers in two days October 12-13, 2009 aiming at providing basic knowledge about the harmful effects of secondhand smoking, measures to reduce the harmful effects of secondhand smoking; skills implementation, monitoring and evaluation activities to strengthen the smoke-free policy in the health facilities; and unifying the implementation and action plan of the health sector in tobacco control.

On October 16th, 2009, Representatives of VPHA attended and delivered a presentation on the role of professional social International Symposium and the first meeting of the Southeast Asia Public



Health Association taking place in Indonesia. The first meeting, with the theme "State of Public Health: Global, regional and local," attracted the participation of 400 delegates from Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam and Malaysia

From October 25th - 28th, 2009, in Beijing, Representatives of the VPHA attended the West Pacific Regional Conference on Public Health, where public health professionals shared experiences, new ideas and findings in the field of public health education, research and practice. From October 29th - 30th, VPHA representatives also attended a training workshop on capacity building for members of the World Public Health Federation - an initiative of the American Public Health Association to strengthen the role of member associations in the field of improving the health and policy advocacy in each country.

FOCUS - PUBLIC HEALTH INITIATIVES ON VIETNAMESE CARING FOR THE ELDERLY

Aging population trend is being observed in the world and Vietnam, it also challenges society to adaptation. The Aging population has become a priority of governments, non-governmental organizations, and communities. Vietnam Public Health Association (VPHA) has chosen health care for the elderly to be one of our top priorities. We have been implementing the component of "Public health programs initiative on the Elderly in Vietnam" in the project named "Support the Operation of the Vietnam Public Health Association to enhance the Public Health Network in Vietnam" funded by Atlantic Philanthropies (AP) from 2008 to 2011 which involves many meaningful activities.

According to Vietnam Living Standard Survey 1999, 2004 and 2006 showed the proportion of people age 60 and older is 8%, 9.92% and 10.4%, respectively; it is eventually projected to reach 29.4% in 2050. However, there is a gap in the process of establishing comprehensive public health programs for elderly. VPHA, with the intention to obtain scientific evidences for developing high-quality policies and a comprehensive general strategy for activities in the field of aged support, is now focusing on:

* To set up a wide network which involves key persons in policy making agencies, universities and institutional agencies, hospitals and communicators sharing information and cooperating for elderly general strategy.

* Study on review on support policies for the elderly and the implementation and enforcement of those policies, scientific research and support system (public and private areas) and cross sectional study on health elderly situation, health needs and elderly health care services to bring out evidences to advocate for stronger policies, and to recommend for a suitable model of

age-friendly care based on Vietnamese living conditions.

* Organize conferences to disseminate the research results to advocate for the development of elderly support policies.

* Organize study tour to learn experience and ideas from aged-friendly models in neighborhood countries. After that, we will pilot and find out which model is feasible and efficacy based on Vietnam conditions.

Some formative findings of the review are:

1. Vietnam will have to face the problem of its aging population in the first decade of the 21st century, earlier than demographic professionals' prediction and it is eventually projected that the proportion of older people in population will be more than Thailand by 2050.
2. The Elderly Ordinance and Action Plan on Elderly Support had been adopted much later than other countries in the Asia-Pacific region, and we still lack a strategy plan.
3. Determinants of elderly health have not been addressed by scientific evidence: behavioral factors (smoking, alcohol abuse, etc), individual, psychological and environmental factors, etc.
4. Elderly support models are diversified, however, there is no guideline and standard for

quality assessment of these models.

VPHA has organized a meeting with the theme "Uniting power in elderly care support" which involves professionals and activists in the field of aging issues. The first meeting was facilitated by Prof. Le Vu Anh, the Standing Vice President of VPHA, and 18 participants came from Vietnam National Committee on Ageing,

Ministry of Labor, Invalid and Social Affairs (MOLISA), Ministry of Health (MOH), WHO, National Institute of Gerontology, Hanoi Medical School, National Institute of Nutrition, RECAS, SHAPC, and Atlantic Philanthropies.

Participants agreed that it is necessary to establish a wide network that will compose of

government agencies, universities, institutes, hospitals and professional associations to share information and develop a general strategy.

VPHA commits to be an active member of this network and to coordinate activities among members. We will conduct several systematic surveys to gather evidence to advocate Vietnam government's commitment in developing long-term strategy and policies supporting older people, to adapt with the population transition in Vietnam.



Q&A

Q: Please advise on the organization and operation of the VPHA.

A: The VPHA is organized and operates on the principles of voluntarism, self-governance, and self-funding. The organization includes:

1. At the central level: The Vietnam Public Health
2. In the provinces and cities directly under the Central Government (hereinafter referred to as provinces) is the Provincial Public Health Association.
3. At the grassroots level: Branches.

Currently, the VPHA has developed its network in 10 provinces and cities in the North, Central, and South regions, including: Lao Cai, Hai Duong, Thai Binh, Ha Tinh, Hue, Da Nang, Nha Trang, Dong Nai, Ho Chi Minh City and Dong Thap

UPCOMING EVENTS

- VPHA will hold a seminar on policies and policy enforcement to support the elderly in Vietnam.
- VPHA will investigate the initial knowledge attitude practice of people in four wards: An Khe, Hoa Khe, West Thanh Khe and Chinh Gian (Da Nang) in food safety consumption and preventing dioxin transmission through food.
- PPHA in Hue, Ha Tinh will hold the seminar on the harmful effects of tobacco.
- Thai Binh Public Health Association will hold a conference on implementing smoke-free offices.
- PPHA in Khanh Hoa, Hai Duong, Dong Thap province will implement capacity building training on tobacco control for the Health, Education and Transport sectors.