

2019

ASH Annual Report

Dedicated to a world free from tobacco-related disease and death



1250 Connecticut Ave, NW, 7th Fl, Washington, DC 20036
(202) 659 - 4310 | <https://ash.org>

ASH
ACTION
ON SMOKING & HEALTH

Dedicated to ZERO Tobacco Deaths

Cigarettes are
unreasonably
dangerous.



They only
belong in
museums.

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Executive Director's Message

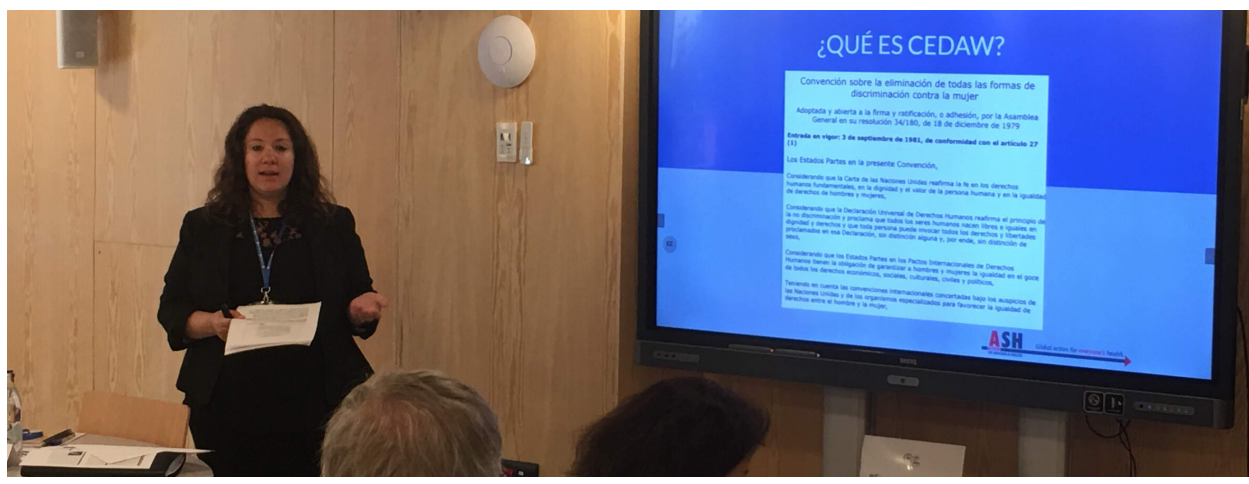


This year has been a busy and productive year for ASH and many gains have been made to advance health. We continued to make strides in ensuring that countries and agencies in the United States and around the world recognize that they need to do more to address the tobacco epidemic in order to protect the human right to health, a right that is constantly under attack by the tobacco industry.

In 2019, ASH's staff trained hundreds of health advocates in the U.S. and around the globe on how to best protect the right to health from the tobacco industry. We advocated for your right to health in global fora such as the United Nations. And we had the privilege to engage with local jurisdictions as they took novel measures to protect the right to health. One such example is Beverly Hills, CA which has passed legislation to phase out the commercial sale of tobacco products in June 2019. Neighboring Manhattan Beach, CA joined them in early 2020. Such novel initiatives can take us one step closer to ending the tobacco epidemic.

The harm caused by the tobacco industry is entirely preventable and much has been achieved in the past decade to protect society from these harms.

Countries around the world continue to implement measures to reduce smoking, but unfortunately this progress is not uniform, in big part because of tobacco industry interference. Tobacco companies continue to act as vectors and agents of death and disease, and they are ever evolving in developing a wide range of new products and communication campaigns to position themselves as "part of the solution." While their messaging claims to be in support of public health, the actions of tobacco companies are not, and their goals are very clear: to gain more revenue through increased levels of nicotine addiction to generate more sales.



As a result, even in the countries that are actively implementing policies to reduce smoking, cigarettes and harmful tobacco products remain ubiquitous and the most vulnerable citizens disproportionately suffer the consequences. **Our governments have the duty to protect our health and our rights from the tobacco industry.** The onus is on governments to take further action to protect us and our children from the harms caused by nicotine addiction and smoking.

Clearly, continuing to market and sell addictive and lethal products like cigarettes is in direct conflict with the human right to health.

Despite all of the progress made in the past decade, we have to recognize that maintaining the status quo is not enough. It is time for all of us to ask our governments to do more to end this epidemic.

In addition to accelerating the implementation of the evidence-based policies that we know help decrease nicotine addiction and smoking, such as protecting everyone from tobacco smoke, increasing the price of tobacco products, banning the advertising of tobacco products, banning all flavoring of tobacco products and providing access to smoking cessation, governments must also take steps to phase out the commercial sale of tobacco products, which kill more than 8 million people every year.

Such bold actions are necessary if we want to ensure that future generations don't see their right to health undermined by the actions of the tobacco industry.

We hope that the next decade will see an end to the tobacco epidemic, and with your help, we can achieve this goal. How will future generations judge our governments if they are not able to stop this totally preventable epidemic?

Laurent Huber
Executive Director
Action on Smoking and Health (ASH)

Goal 1

Serve as an incubator & catalyst for interventions that phase out the sale of commercial tobacco products (i.e. Project Sunset)



The word “groundbreaking” is overused, but 2019 truly saw a groundbreaking event in the history of the tobacco wars. **Beverly Hills, CA became the first U.S. jurisdiction to vote to phase out the sale of all tobacco products.** As of this writing, a second city, Manhattan Beach, has joined them, and more are lining up to follow.

You may recall that ASH began its Project Sunset program in 2018. And we never expected to see the first “proof of concept” so soon. But it turns out, we weren’t the only ones rethinking how to take on tobacco.

The vaping epidemic in the U.S. has opened the eyes and imaginations of city and state officials across the country. As they debate how to keep vapes out of the hands of children, many are asking “why are we still dealing with these products at all?”

In the case of Beverly Hills, it was then-Vice Mayor (now Mayor) John Mirisch who publicly asked this question. ASH was proud to testify and provide technical support, but all the credit goes to the city council and people of Beverly Hills. Mayor Mirisch later joined ASH’s Chris Bostic at a standing room-only presentation at the National Conference on Tobacco or Health. Afterward, ASH Executive Director Laurent Huber awarded the Mayor (on behalf of his city) the first-ever Project Sunset Award for Courage

in Public Health.

Beyond fanning the flames in Southern California, ASH was relentless in 2019 in pushing Project Sunset forward. In February, we held the first meeting of a global steering committee to mirror our efforts here in the U.S. The committee seeks to replicate national Project Sunset movements across the globe and met throughout the year. Then in March 2020, the Dutch House of Representatives passed a bill that aims to remove tobacco products from convenience stores and to restrict sales to tobacco-only, adult-only specialty stores.

ASH continued its efforts to understand public sentiment on ending tobacco sales. Working with experts at Stanford University, the University of Oklahoma, and Syracuse University, we were pleasantly surprised to discover that the public is even more supportive than the public health community. In one survey, we found that no matter how we asked the question, at least half of smokers think it’s a good idea to phase out commercial tobacco product sales!

In 2020, ASH will encourage more cities in California, across the country, and around the world to embrace the end of the tobacco epidemic. Hopefully, we’ll put ourselves out of business soon.

Goal 2

Hold the tobacco industry accountable through the rule of law

Our tobacco criminal liability program has continued to make progress in 2019. Our Dutch colleagues had been waiting on a decision from the Dutch court regarding their attempted murder case that was heavily supported by Dutch citizens. Unfortunately, in January, the Court returned a decision saying that it was an issue for the Dutch Parliament to decide rather than the courts. This was a powerful learning experience for everyone involved, particularly given that the Court did not reject the case and simply stated it was not in their jurisdiction to decide.

In many ways, this case was a victory. Over the course of two years, this case gained incredible momentum, with over 31,000 individuals signing on in support. Organizations, including the Dutch Cancer Society, also joined the case. The

social movement behind the case was amazing. A study in May 2018, conducted by Kantar Public and commissioned by the Dutch Cancer Society, found that a large majority (61%) of the Dutch population think it is right that cigarette manufacturers have been called to account

ASH continues to work on several other criminal cases around the world. We are currently keeping the status of these actions confidential, to protect us and our partners from tobacco industry interference and infiltration.

We continue to monitor ongoing cases and legal precedents to build towards a successful criminal prosecution. We are also considering civil cases that will achieve the same goal: ending the commercial sale of tobacco products through judicial decisions.



Goal 3

Use global norms to move local communities toward a zero tobacco-use prevalence



2019 was a landmark year for our human rights program.

In March, the President of Romania graciously hosted **ASH's Global Forum on Human Rights and a Tobacco-Free World** in his Presidential Palace in Bucharest, Romania. Global leaders in health and human rights attended, and ASH showcased the legitimacy of our program and the exciting new developments that will help end the tobacco epidemic.



ASH's **Tobacco and Human Rights Resource Hub** was launched on our website in March 2019 and lauded by the public health community who found it to be an invaluable resource and easy to use.

We held capacity building and training workshops this year, in Romania, Spain, Kuwait, Japan, India, and Panama focused on using a human rights-based approach to prevent the tobacco epidemic and non-communicable diseases.



ASH worked with local partners to draft and submit reports from their countries to human rights treaty bodies, asking the human rights committees to consider tobacco control when evaluating human rights in those countries. For example, following ASH's workshop in Madrid, the Spanish coalition who attended began working on a submission to the **Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)** with ASH's assistance. We also submitted reports on Israel, Colombia, the United States and Japan to human rights treaty bodies.



In addition, we have answered numerous calls for input from the United Nations. For example, ASH submitted a letter highlighting the link between tobacco control, implementation of the WHO tobacco treaty, and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to the **Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)**. We also submitted



“

A human-rights based discourse is the fundamental blueprint for empowerment, it is the only way forward to spur the social movements required to demand the right to health & implementation FCTC & action.

”

HRH Princess Dina Mired

President, Union for International Cancer Control

statements to the **UN Human Rights Council**, the **UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights**, the **Committee on Children’s Rights** and others, linking tobacco and human rights. Many of these statements were joined by our partner organizations.

In addition to these written submissions, ASH attended major human rights negotiations at the United Nations where we advocated for the inclusion of tobacco control, including the **Commission on the Status of Women** in New York and the **41st Regular Session of the UN Human Rights Council (HRC)** in Geneva, Switzerland. ASH submitted a written statement in advance of the session, and ASH Executive Director Laurent Huber read an oral statement which solidified that ASH’s tobacco standpoint

would be included in the official record of the UN Human Rights Council; we made an additional statement at the 42nd Session of the HRC too. These statements promote and strengthen our work by including tobacco in formal human rights agendas.

Much of this work continues in 2020, and in addition, we are preparing for the 9th negotiations (**COP9**) of the World Health Organization (WHO) tobacco treaty (**the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, FCTC**), where it is our mission to see human rights included in the agenda. We continue to encourage the human rights community to address tobacco, and at COP, we will encourage the tobacco community to address human rights.

Goal 4

Ensure effective communications that create a desire to end the tobacco epidemic

This was a big year of raising ASH's public profile, bolstered by programmatic achievements. From the Human Rights Forum and European Network for Smoking Prevention (ENSP) Conference in March to Project Sunset's release at the National Conference on Tobacco or Health (NCTOH) in August and the vaping illness outbreak from August on, we saw steady growth in ASH's media coverage.

Reporters at key elite media outlets consistently reach out to ASH for comment, and we ensured that all staff members are trained spokespeople for ASH. Supported by our local partners, the Global Forum was covered in major outlets like *Euractiv*, *EuroReporter*, the Romanian President's news alerts, a European Commission news alert, and a WHO FCTC News Story. Other particularly notable moments were the coverage ASH secured in the *Los Angeles Times* when Beverly Hills, CA voted to phase out the sale of tobacco products, and the repeated coverage we secured in the *New York Times*.

During the vaping illness outbreak, we were quoted in print, digital, radio, and tv outlets answering questions on the risks of vaping and pointing out that Americans cannot ignore cigarettes when having a national conversation about regulating nicotine.

We also continued to strengthen our social media reach and engagement in 2019. The Global Forum was well attended by high profile individuals who came out in force to support our messaging across social media, boosting our Facebook engagement by 81% and Twitter engagement by 151% as compared to the previous month. The Forum also created a 35% increase in website traffic for ASH, as compared to our usual traffic.

We continue to try new strategies to boost email engagement, and we maintain high open rates from our email supporters, as compared to industry standards, with our quarterly newsletter being particularly popular, demonstrating that our supporters want to stay updated and involved with ASH.



Ending the Tobacco Epidemic



2019 was a very busy and fruitful year. ASH was able to multiply its impact by reaching out and connecting to researchers, advocates, and officials across the globe.

This requires long flights, long hours, and a willingness to get on the phone at any time of the day or night so we can speak with colleagues and health advocates around the world. It's exhausting, but exhilarating, and we love our jobs.

In ASH's 50+ years, there have been many ups and downs, including some landmark years. When the final history of the tobacco wars is told, 2019 will stand out.

The Global Forum on Human Rights and a Tobacco-Free World signaled that we had achieved our goal of convincing both the public health and human rights communities that they should be working together against Big Tobacco. Beverly Hills started a trend that will eventually remove tobacco from the stream of commerce.

We know it will never be easy, and we know it won't be over tomorrow, but we can see it. To misquote Winston Churchill, **"this is not the end, but it may be the beginning of the end."**

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Advancing Tobacco Free Communities (ATFC)
American Academy of Pediatricians
American Cancer Society
American Heart Association
Americans for Nonsmokers' Rights
American Lung Association
Association of State and Territorial Health Officials
Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
Bloomberg Initiative
Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids
Canadian Cancer Society
Corporate Accountability International
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Human Rights and Tobacco Control Network

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NCD Alliance
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Thoracic Foundation
University of California, San Francisco Center for Tobacco Control Research and Education
United Nations Economic and Social Council
United Nations Human Rights Council
World Health Organization



Statement of Financial Position

	DECEMBER 31,	
	2019	2018
ASSETS		
CURRENT ASSETS:		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 127,858	\$ 579,267
Grants and contributions receivable	41,915	48,000
Prepaid expenses	10,769	4,293
Investments	64,810	88,067
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	\$ 245,352	\$ 719,627
PROPERTY AND EQUIPMENT, NET	\$ -	\$ -
OTHER ASSETS:		
Security deposit	\$ 5,085	\$ 5,085
Restricted cash	152,190	603,149
Restricted investments	5,325,252	4,226,547
TOTAL OTHER ASSETS	\$ 5,482,527	\$ 4,834,781
TOTAL ASSETS	\$ 5,727,879	\$ 5,554,408
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
CURRENT LIABILITIES:		
Accounts payable	\$ 22,228	\$ 10,178
Accrued expenses and other liabilities	173,513	180,422
TOTAL LIABILITIES	\$ 195,741	\$ 190,600
NET ASSETS:		
Without donor restrictions:		
Undesignated	\$ 54,696	\$ 406,112
Board-designated	521,032	470,160
Total without donor restrictions	\$ 575,728	\$ 876,272
With donor restrictions	4,956,410	4,487,536
TOTAL NET ASSETS	\$ 5,532,138	\$ 5,363,808
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	\$ 5,727,879	\$ 5,554,408

Our Motivation: Our Future

Below is an essay ASH received from a 6th grader known as A.C.R.S. at Weston Middle School in Weston, CT.

Some people think that smoking is so cool, that it's not harmful, and that it's fun to do. But here's a little secret; they are none of those things. Smoking is deadly. Cigarettes kill about six million people each year. That's how many innocent people die. It ruins people's health. Multiple diseases can occur from smoking cigarettes. For example, you could acquire lung cancer, COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease), heart disease, stroke, and many other diseases. Smokers themselves wish they could quit. Lydia Saad, a Gallup journalist, states, "Twenty-four percent of national adults told Gallup in a survey earlier this year that they smoke cigarettes, and 79% say they would like to give it up." Keeping cigarettes in people's lives is the worst mistake this country can make. If we want to save lives and keep our country great, we must ban smoking.

Smoking is deadly. Robert N. Proctor, a BMJ journalist, states, "Cigarettes kill about 6 million people every year, a number that will grow before it shrinks." Can you believe how many innocent people die every year just from an item the size of your finger? Well, it's true and it's sad. Smoking in the Twentieth Century killed 100 million people. A billion could die in this century unless people stop smoking. Robert N. Proctor also adds, "Even if present rates of consumption drop to zero by 2100, we will still have about 300 million tobacco deaths in this century." The University of Illinois Extension says that cigarette smoke contains almost 4,000 chemicals, which include DDT, arsenic, and formaldehyde. Almost 90 percent of these chemicals stay in your lungs after smoking a cigarette. From these poisons, you could die of lung cancer and heart attacks. From smoking, lung cancer is responsible for nearly 135,000 U.S. deaths per year.

Companies are making smoking even worse for smokers. Cigarettes carry two times the amount of nicotine than in the 1960s. Nicotine is an addictive substance found in all tobacco products. Truth Initiative states, "Big Tobacco companies genetically engineered their tobacco crops to contain two times the amount of nicotine and adjusted their cigarette design so that the nicotine delivered to smokers increased by 14.5 percent." Cigarette businesses have been loading cigarettes with chemical compounds. Bronchodilators were added so that tobacco smoke can more easily enter the lungs. Sugars, flavors, and menthol were increased to dull the harshness of smoke and make it easier to inhale. Ammonia was added so that nicotine travels to the brain faster. These chemicals can destroy your health permanently.

Smokers themselves wish they could quit. Do you know why they wish they could quit? It's because they realize they made a mistake. They can barely quit though. Do you know why? Cigarettes carry high doses of nicotine that is highly addictive. Lydia Saad, a Gallup journalist, states, "Twenty-four percent of national adults told Gallup in a survey earlier this year that they smoke cigarettes, and 79% say they would like to give it up." Cigarette smoke contains many dangerous chemicals, including tar, carbon monoxide, acetaldehyde, nitrosamines, nicotine, and more that is highly addictive. Robert N. Proctor, a BMJ journalist, states, "Cigarettes are very different from alcohol or even marijuana. Only about 10-15% of people who drink liquor ever become alcoholics, versus addiction rates of 80% or 90% for people who smoke."

Most smokers want to give up and they know it can harm you, but it is too hard to give up. Cigarettes do carry high doses of nicotine which make smokers addicted very quickly, maybe, even on their first smoke. Smokers cannot give up smoking because they are hooked on it. They can't stop. How can people who can't live properly without just one cigarette live without them entirely? They either don't want to stop or will want to stop, but it doesn't matter. They will not be able to stop. I know that it is hard to quit. I know that people cannot stop. But if we don't want millions of people to die, we must ban smoking. Just one cigarette can ruin your life permanently. We cannot let people keep on dying and ruining their health. People are getting addicted to cigarettes and not even knowing until they end up with lung cancer or heart disease. Keeping cigarettes in people's lives is the worst mistake this country can make. If we want to save lives and keep our country great, we must ban smoking.

About The Author: I feel so strongly about banning smoking because I have a personal connection. Both of my grandfathers died from smoking. One died before I was ever born. He died when he was only sixty years old. My other grandfather died when I was in first grade. I regret not spending enough time with him. I could have been with him more. But I also regret not being able to have even met my other grandfather. They were born roughly in the early 1900's. They had no idea what harm smoking could have done because everyone smoked. We need to ban smoking to save lives. We cannot let people keep dying. We must ban smoking.



Share this report

There's a reason why you stand with ASH. Let your friends, family, and coworkers know why ending the tobacco epidemic is important to you. www.ASH.org



Follow us on Social Media

Your daily updates on the latest successes in our movement can be found on Facebook and Twitter.



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Share your story with ASH

We want to know how tobacco has impacted your life and what motivates you to stay involved with our work. Email your story to HQ@ash.org and we can feature your experiences on our website, social media, and future reports. Your story may be the tipping point to get more people involved in the fight against big tobacco!

Sign up for newsletters

Email us at HQ@ash.org to begin receiving our quarterly newsletter of progress and ways to get involved.

Make a donation

You are the reason we can stand up to big tobacco every day. Your generosity and dedication allow ASH to be the catalyst for innovative concepts and groundbreaking programs which improve health for all. Without your help, we would not be the incubator pushing for a tobacco-free future. www.ash.org/donate



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Seventh Floor
Washington, D.C. 20036



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