Adventist health leaders welcome new U.S. cigarette warning labels N

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Jamaica: Northern Caribbean University elects interim president

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23 Jun 2011, Silver Spring, Maryland, United States...Ansel Oliver/ANN

Seventh-day Adventist health leaders welcomed the United States' new policy requiring of cigarette manufacturers to add new graphic warning labels on cigarette packs and advertising by October of next year.

U.S. officials on Tuesday announced the requirement for cigarette makers to display on packs one of nine graphic images, including a sick smoker struggling to breathe with an oxygen mask or a mouth with stained teeth. The labels go beyond the small, text-only warnings, which were last adjusted in the 1980s.

The new graphic warnings must cover the top 50 percent of all cigarette packs and 20 percent of the top of each advertisement, officials from the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services said.

The warning labels are part of a 2009 law that gave the Food and Drug Administration authority to regulate tobacco. Several tobacco companies subsequently sued the FDA, saying the labeling requirement violates their Constitutional right to free speech.

"It's precisely because we support freedom of speech that we welcome the use of pictures that are each worth a thousand words," said Dr. Allan Handysides, Health Ministries director of the Adventist world church. "The pictures will transmit a message that is both truthful and remedial in nature."

Smoking is the leading cause of preventable and premature death in the U.S. and is linked to some 5 million deaths worldwide each year, Handysides said. About one in five adults and teens in the U.S. smoke.

Major U.S. news agencies reported Wednesday that top tobacco makers declined to comment on the warning labels or said that they were "reviewing them."

About two dozen other countries require graphic warning images, including the U.S.’s northern neighbor, Canada, which in 2000 required no less than 60 percent of labels and advertising to carry warnings. That has significantly dropped the rate of smoking there, Handysides said.

Adventist Church Associate Health Ministries Director Dr. Peter Landless praised the move and urged the U.S. Government to do more.

"We affirm the U.S. Government for this courageous initiative and urge them to proceed with the next bold, logical and overdue step -- to ratify the World Framework Convention on Tobacco Control," he said, referring to a treaty adopted by the World Health Assembly in 2003. The U.S. is one of 22 nations that has not ratified the treaty, which sets universal standards stating the dangers of tobacco and limiting its use.

"Smoking and lung cancer are inextricably and causally related both in those who smoke and those exposed to second hand smoke," Landless said. "Every means must be employed to decrease the number of current smokers if the number of people dying from tobacco related deaths are to be decreased."

The Adventist Church, whose Five Day Stop Smoking Plan was one of the first smoking cessation programs, now largely partners with the Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids, the American Cancer
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Inter-American Division  >  Communication Department

Libna Stevens  
Jun 23, 2011

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June 23, 2011 - Manchester, Jamaica...Nigel Coke/IAD

One week after the retirement of longstanding president Dr. Herbert Thompson, the Board of Governors of Northern Caribbean University (NCU) has put in place an interim president. Dr. Daniel Fider who has been serving at NCU for the past twelve years in various capacities is the new institution's president. He had been serving as vice president with responsibility for Facilities Planning and Information Services and an Associate Professor of Leadership.

Before he joined the workforce of NCU twelve years ago, Dr. Fider who is also an auditor by profession, worked for 25 years with multi-national corporations in the areas of management, accounting and forensic auditing.

"It is a privilege and also a challenge, which I humbly accept, to serve in the interim as president of this great Adventist Institution," said Dr. Fider. "We are at a point of transition and at a point that we need to continue what was started years ago. My commitment and determination is to do what my church and university ask me to do. With the support of the faculty and staff, and the understanding of students, I think we can move forward doing great things for this university until the position is filled permanently."

The university board has also selected an search team, a normal procedure when the position of president is to be filled, church leaders said.

"The Board of Governors believes that Dr. Fider has the ability and experience to provide leadership to our University during this transitional stage," said NCU Board Chairman Pastor Everett Brown who also serves as president of the church in Jamaica. "We pledge our support to him and his team as they lead the University."

NCU is co-owned and operated by the Jamaica Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists (JAMU) and the Atlantic Caribbean Union Mission of Seventh-day Adventists (ACUM), both of which came out of the reorganization of the former West Indies Union Conference in November 2010.