

Indian Dental Association to Launch 5,000 Tobacco Intervention Initiative Centres in India

Dentists turn counsellors, campaign for Tobacco Free India

Gurgaon, Haryana, June 5, 2009 /[India PRwire](#)/ -- The Indian Dental Association (IDA) today announced that it will be launching 5,000 Tobacco Intervention Initiative Centres (TIICs) across India during the next two years. The first phase of the launch kicked off early this week as 56 TIICs were set up across Maharashtra. To further reinforce its commitment to create a tobacco free India, IDA also joined WHO this year in observing 'World No Tobacco Day'. Dentists who volunteer to serve in these centres will receive orientation at NIMHANS, Bangalore and at centres in Delhi.

In Maharashtra, IDA had set up more than 20 one-day information and counselling booths in locations like railway stations, hospitals, malls and airports. Doctors screened patients at these centres all day and distributed information booklets to create awareness and appealed to users to quit tobacco.

IDA has been campaigning for a ban on tobacco use since its inception because tobacco affects oral health in several ways, including causing cancer of the lips and tongue. The highlight of the event was a function at St Andrew's College Auditorium, Bandra, where leading doctors and Bollywood celebrities joined hands to spread the message about the harmful effects of tobacco use.

Emphasising the consequences of tobacco use, Lt. Gen. (Dr) Paramjit Singh, President, IDA said, "The focus of IDA's campaign against the use of tobacco in all its forms is to secure for the people their right to health and healthy living. This annual day focuses on the dangers of using tobacco, the business practices of tobacco companies, what IDA has been doing to fight the tobacco menace and what people can do to protect themselves and future generations."

Dr Ashok Dhoble, Hon. Secretary General, IDA said, "This is a landmark initiative from IDA and we hope to reach out to as many people as possible. Maharashtra is just the beginning. We plan to take TIICs across India soon. Sustained campaigns by IDA over the years have contributed to the government banning smoking in all public places since October 2, 2008. We hope this initiative will yield greater results."

Tobacco is the leading cause of preventable deaths. More than five million people die globally from the effects of tobacco every year — a larger number of deaths than from HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis combined. Of these, nearly 1 million deaths occur in India. Every eight seconds someone, somewhere in the world, dies as a result of tobacco use. It is the only legal consumer product that kills when used exactly as the manufacturer intends. Up to half of all smokers will die from a tobacco-related disease. Second-hand smoke harms everyone exposed to it.

This year, WHO's campaign focuses on 'tobacco health warnings' in the hope that visual warnings will help people quit. Effective health warnings, especially those that include pictures, have been proven to motivate users to quit and to reduce the appeal of tobacco for those not yet addicted.

Speaking about the marketing initiatives supporting the IDA campaign, Hetal Thakkar, Head of Marketing at IDA said, "Through the launch of the 56 TIICs across the State and the 22 one-day booths set up across the city we hope to reach out to a large number of people. To ensure awareness about the importance of oral health, it was essential to reach out to a wider audience via a comprehensive marketing campaign."

IDA is using 'World No Tobacco Day' as a platform to highlight the growing menace of tobacco consumption and secure a total ban on tobacco to ensure improved oral health in India.

Notes to Editor

About the Indian Dental Association

IDA is an organization of more than 50,000 dental professionals in India committed to ensuring optimal oral health in the country and operating through its 29 State and over 250 local branches. It has been leading the oral health campaign in several ways since its inception in 1946.

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