Bans Boost Mouth Cancer Campaign

Mouth Cancer Action Month’s timely launch as MPs vote to ban tobacco vending machines and point of sale displays

The British Dental Health Foundation (BDHF) has welcomed the decision to ban tobacco vending machines before this month’s Mouth Cancer Action Month.

MPs voted in October to ban tobacco vending machines and retain the ban on tobacco displays at point-of-sale.

The British Dental Health Foundation (BDHF) - whose support for the ban put forward the oral health case for tobacco control measures - praised the decision.

BDHF chief executive, Dr Nigel Carter, said: “Our Mouth Cancer Action Month campaign began Sunday, November 1 so this news is a great boost.

“Tobacco is linked to three-quarters of mouth cancer cases and also worsens gum disease.”

“Banning tobacco vending machines is a landmark decision, which will help keep tobacco out of children’s hands. The point-of-sale display ban is proven to help prevent impulse purchases so this vote is very welcome.”

The campaign promotes lifestyle choices such as quitting smoking, cutting down on alcohol and eating healthily. Mouth cancer kills about one person every five hours in the UK, with about 1,800 dying each year. It is diagnosed annually in more than 5,000 people, an overall rise of 40 per cent in ten years.

US research shows chronic gum disease may also present a high risk for mouth cancer.

The scheme is funded by OCF partner, the Bruce Paltrow Oral Cancer Fund, in memory of producer/director, Bruce Paltrow who died of oral cancer.

OCF founder, Brian Hill, said: “Our intent is to identify free clinics and health service providers in areas that have a high concentration of people who are both at risk for oral cancer and without the financial means to pay for comprehensive oral exams.”

Native Health’s dental director, Dr. Mahasin Hangala, added: “The community we serve has the highest rate of tobacco usage of any major demographic group in the country, an extremely high poverty rate and very poor access to health care.”

Because of reported links between oral cancer and the sexually transmitted HPV, screenings are provided for everyone 16 and above.

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