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**Health Groups Oppose Threats on Tobacco, Medicines
in Trans-Pacific Partnership
AMA, AAP, ACPM, AMSA, CPATH Call for New Direction
September 16, 2011**

The [American Medical Association](#) and specialty medical groups for [Pediatrics](#) (AAP), [Preventive Medicine](#) (ACPM) and [Medical Students](#) (AMSA), the [Center for Policy Analysis on Trade and Health](#) (CPATH) and other public health experts called on trade officials to reverse course and protect health, as the U.S. and eight other Pacific Rim nations gathered this week in Chicago for talks on a new Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) trade deal.

Dr. Ellen R. Shaffer, PhD MPH, Co-Director of CPATH, stated, "Trade rules make deadly tobacco products cheaper and easier to sell, but life-saving prescription drugs more expensive. We call on the U.S. Trade Representative to create a 21st century trade agreement that protects health: 1. Exclude tobacco and tobacco products from the TPP. 2. Support access to affordable medicines."

The U.S. Trade Representative released a [vaguely worded statement](#) describing its proposed policy at the meeting, but proposed text of the agreements is not publicly disclosed.. Shaffer noted, "The drug and tobacco industries are relying on secret trade talks to trump public opinion and prop up their failing business models. Congress and the public deserve the same access to the policy process that drug and tobacco corporations now enjoy, to discuss these life and death proposals in the light of day."

Trade Deals Undermine Tobacco Control

Tobacco use is the world's leading preventable cause of death and disease, accounting for 5.2 million deaths each year, including 438,000 in the U.S. Trade agreements cut tariffs on cigarettes, reducing prices and boosting sales.

The U.S. limits marketing that targets younger people, and will start using graphic warning labels that encourage adult smokers to quit. Phillip Morris International has used trade rules to file charges against these effective tobacco control measures, claiming they interfere with their intellectual property rights.

Costly Medicine

The pharmaceutical industry is also turning to secret trade deals to prop up profits as their blockbuster drugs go off patent. [CPATH's research](#) established that intellectual property rules in the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) raised medicine prices in Guatemala by up to 856%. The Australia-U.S. Free Trade Agreement authorized [drug company intrusions](#) into Australia's cost-effective drug purchasing system. While the system remains stable, some prices for statins [have increased](#).