



September 13, 2011

The Honorable Ron Kirk  
United States Trade Representative  
600 17th Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20508

Re: Ensuring Access to Medicines and Exclusion of Tobacco and Alcohol and Their Products  
from Negotiations on the Trans-Pacific Partnership Trade Agreement

Dear Ambassador Kirk:

The American Medical Students Association (AMSA) appreciates the opportunity to offer comments on the proposed Trans Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPPA). As the nation's oldest and largest independent organization for physicians-in-training representing more than 35,000 members, AMSA supports global health equity through international agreements that secure patients' rights to life-saving medications in resource-poor settings and encourage investment in public health as outlined in the Doha Declaration.

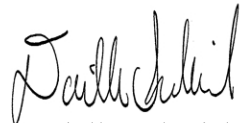
AMSA strongly urges a revision of the proposed TPPA to ensure access to essential, affordable medicines for patients living in TPPA negotiating nations including the United States. It is critical countries be permitted to engage in parallel importation to ensure citizens' access to inexpensive medications. Therefore, we recommend that the TPPA refrain from granting copyright holders the right to prohibit importation of their works. Consistent with President Obama's 2012 budget proposal request, AMSA strongly urges that the term for data protection be limited to 7 years for biologic products. Similarly, pharmaceutical companies should not be eligible for new 20-year patents based on minor modifications to existing products that do not meaningfully benefit patients. Such provisions would allow for timely access to generic medications for suffering patients that could save lives.

AMSA also strongly urges the exclusion of both alcohol and tobacco products from the TPPA. Tobacco and alcohol use significantly contribute to global disease morbidity and mortality with tobacco alone contributing to one in ten deaths worldwide and alcohol use accounting for nearly 4% of deaths globally each year. The Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) recognized the role of "price and tax measures" in reducing tobacco consumption. Failing to exclude tobacco products from the TPPA will undermine the spirit of the FCTC with unnecessary costs to human life.

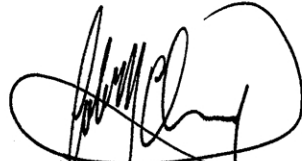
AMSA believes that the health of patients should be prioritized over industry profits. We hope that the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement and future trade agreements will do the same.

Thank you for your consideration of these public health concerns.

Sincerely,



Danielle Salovich  
National President



Colm McCluney  
Education & Advocacy Fellow

<sup>1</sup>World Health Organization (2008). The top 10 causes of death. Available at <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs310/en/index2.html>

<sup>2</sup>World Health Organization (2011). *Global Status Report on Alcohol and Health 2011*. Available at [http://www.who.int/entity/substance\\_abuse/publications/global\\_alcohol\\_report/msbgsruprofiles.pdf](http://www.who.int/entity/substance_abuse/publications/global_alcohol_report/msbgsruprofiles.pdf)

<sup>3</sup>World Health Organization (2003). Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. Available at <http://whqlibdoc.who.int/publications/2003/9241591013.pdf>