



California Chapter 1

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

**PRESIDENT**

**Gena Lewis, MD**

Children's Hospital & Research  
Center Oakland  
5200 Claremont Avenue  
Oakland, CA 94609  
510-428-3885x2621  
[glewis@mail.cho.org](mailto:glewis@mail.cho.org)

**VICE PRESIDENT**

**Zoey Goore, MD**

Children's & Women's Hospital  
1600 Eureka Road  
Roseville, CA 95661  
(916) 358-0178  
[zoey.j.goore@kp.org](mailto:zoey.j.goore@kp.org)

**SECRETARY**

**Heidi Román, MD**

750 So Bascom Avenue, #230  
Jose, CA 95128-2603  
(408) 885-5445  
[hroman16@gmail.com](mailto:hroman16@gmail.com)

**TREASURER**

**John Takayama, MD**

2330 Post St., #320  
San Francisco, CA 94143-1660  
(415) 353-2449  
[jtakayama@aap.net](mailto:jtakayama@aap.net)

**PAST PRESIDENT**

**Charles Wibbelsman, MD**

Chief, Teen Clinic  
2200 O'Farrell Street  
San Francisco, CA 94115  
415/833-3445  
[charles.wibbelsman@kp.org](mailto:charles.wibbelsman@kp.org)

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

**Beverly Busher**

68 Mitchell Blvd., Suite 252  
San Rafael, CA 94903  
415/479-9200  
[aapbev@sbcglobal.net](mailto:aapbev@sbcglobal.net)  
[www.aapca1.org](http://www.aapca1.org)

President Barack Obama  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW  
Washington DC 20500

CC: Ambassador Michael Froman,  
United States Trade Representative

November 12, 2013

Dear Mr President,

**As California pediatricians, we write to support ongoing calls for the United States Trade Representative (USTR) to recognize tobacco as a dangerous product unworthy of the same protections that trade agreements confer to other goods and services.**

Accordingly, we ask that your administration and the USTR endorse efforts to exclude tobacco products from the Trans Pacific Partnership, a major trade agreement currently being negotiated between the US and many Pacific Rim nations.

**In our clinics and hospitals, we see the devastating impact of tobacco on our nation's children every day.** Babies exposed to tobacco smoke suffer from disproportionately higher rates of prematurity, birth defects, and sudden death. They grow up to become toddlers who endure asthma exacerbations, pneumonia, and ear infections far more frequently than their peers. Many of our teenage patients who experiment with cigarettes also face dire lifelong consequences: 90% of adult daily smokers initiated before the age of 18 years.

**And although there is more work to be done, implementation of evidence-based health policies—including raising tobacco prices, banning candy- and fruit-flavored cigarettes, and restricting tobacco advertising—have played a role in curbing tobacco's plague on this nation.** Over the past 50 years, we have cut the percentage of US adult smokers in half. Youth smoking has also declined significantly, from a peak in 1997 of 36% of high school students admitting to having smoked a cigarette in the past 30 days, to 18% in 2011.

**However, tobacco companies and tobacco-producing nations are turning to global trade rules to block implementation of such policies.** In the US, our ban on fruit-flavored cigarettes was found to violate World Trade Organization rules. Uruguayan laws that mandated placement of graphic warning labels on cigarette packages are being contested at a World Bank trade court; Philip Morris argues that the warning labels infringe upon the company's intellectual property rights guaranteed under a bilateral trade agreement. Philip Morris is also disputing Australia's plain packaging laws on similar grounds.

**As the United States works toward crafting a new trade agreement, we request that it be built in a manner that protects domestic health laws.** Explicitly excluding tobacco products from the Trans Pacific Partnership would achieve this goal by preventing tobacco companies from exploiting the TPP to undermine local tobacco control policies, reaffirming tobacco's status as a uniquely destructive substance undeserving of the same protections offered to other goods and services.



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We stand in strong support of the 56 United States Congressional Representatives (in their letter dated October 30, 2013) and countless medical and health advocacy organizations who remain excited about this golden opportunity to safeguard children around the world from the ills of tobacco and offer them a healthier life. On behalf of our patients and their families, we thank you for considering our perspective.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Gena Lewis".

Gena Lewis, MD  
President

California Chapter 1, American Academy of Pediatrics, (CA1, AAP)  
*CA1, AAP represents over 2,000 pediatrician members who represent communities from the northern California border to the central San Joaquin Valley.*