

**Time for Action  
Tobacco Control Network  
Strategic Planning Meeting  
June 1, 2005**

**Background**

The Tobacco Control Network (TCN), formed in 1994 to facilitate information sharing between the National Cancer Institute-funded ASSIST Program, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention-funded (CDC) IMPACT program and other national partners. In 1999, in response to the creation of the CDC-funded National Tobacco Control Program, the network reorganized its focus to (a) raise the primacy of tobacco control in all state health agencies, (b) influence policy, and (c) foster collaboration and communication among state and territorial programs. Tobacco Control continues to evolve and, in 2004, TCN officers began a process to redefine and strengthen the role and direction of the network.

The Officers of the Tobacco Control Network (TCN) and representatives from the Tobacco Technical Assistance Program (TTAC), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Association of State and Territorial Health Officers (ASTHO) participated in a strategic planning meeting on June 1, 2005, to discuss and address some critical issues on the TCN horizon.

The meeting was hosted by TTAC and held at the Rollins School of Public Health of Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia. Participants included immediate past and present TCN Officers Diane Beeson, Judy Martin, Mary Beth Welton, Karen DeLeeuw, and Kathy Mangskau; ASTHO representative Kristen Keneipp; CDC representative Jerie Jordan; and TTAC management and staff Kathy Miner, Pam Redmon, Jessica Lowy, Susan Butler, and Rachel Lea. The meeting was facilitated by Alik Pappas Weakland.

**Meeting goal and objectives**

The goal of the meeting was to develop an action agenda, for the Tobacco Control Network, by June 15, 2005.

The meeting objectives were to: (a) identify list of critical issues on the immediate TCN horizon, (b) prioritize the top five issues needing immediate attention, (c) select the leading two issues, (d) develop action plans for the leading two issues, and (e) establish a process to complete the action agenda.

**Process**

Participants engaged in a two-part process to accomplish each objective and achieve the meeting goal of developing an action agenda for TCN.

**Part-one** consisted of a three-step process to elicit and come to consensus on critical issues facing TCN in the next twelve-months (*Objectives a, b, and c*).

In the first step, participants participated in a power brainstorming activity to explore and identify the overarching issues of TCN. Using a starter list developed from the previous work of TCN officers and the results from both a Needs Assessment and a CDC Project Officer Survey conducted by TTAC, participants were able to identify overarching issues, list the key components associated with each of those issues, and readily identify cross-over and redundancy. By the time the activity concluded, the group defined eight overarching issues of TCN.

1. **Advocacy**  
(find a home)
2. **Communication**  
(listserv, Tobacco Free Press, conference call structure, policy calls, annual network meeting)
3. **Leadership**  
(access, conduit—seen as a way to access by others, mentoring program, expertise)
4. **Marketing**  
(awareness, promotion, visibility, branding)
5. **Membership**  
(participation, criteria, partnerships, resources—membership dues, dollars for lobbying)
6. **Network Structure**  
(committees, regional, sustainable, By-Laws, partnerships, resources—multi-level, network as a resource)
7. **Programming**  
(mentoring, technical assistance, trainings, services for program managers, utility)
8. **Sustainability**  
(TCN, funding, people)

In the second step of the process, participants narrowed the list to the five most critical issues through discussion and voting.

1. **Advocacy**
2. **Communication/Programming**
3. **Marketing**
4. **Membership**
5. **Network Structure**

In the final step of part-one, participants were led in a structured group exercise using a Prioritization Matrix to achieve consensus on and rank-order the five most critical issues, thereby identifying the two leading issues to be addressed in part-two of the meeting process. Participants were charged with prioritizing the issues based on three criteria: importance, feasibility, and timeliness. The group engaged in discussion of each criterion for ten minutes and then cast individual votes following each of the three discussion periods. In the end, the group

ranked the issues: (1) Network Structure, (2) Marketing, (3) Communication/Programming, (4) Membership, and (5) Advocacy.

### TCN Prioritization Matrix

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Importance</b>	<b>Feasibility</b>	<b>Timeliness</b>	<b>Total Points</b>
Marketing	3	4	7	14
Advocacy	4	0	0	4
Communication/ Programming	3	5	2	10
Network Structure	7	7	5	19
Membership	1	2	4	7

*Part-two* consisted of a two-step process to develop and agree upon achievable twelve-month action plans for the leading two issues facing TCN (Network Structure and Marketing), and finalize the process to complete the TCN Action Agenda (*Objectives d and e*).

At the onset of this process, participants were asked to keep the mission and goals of TCN in mind. Upon review, participants agreed that TCN mission statement needs to be updated. In addition, TCN officers came to preliminary agreement on these modified versions of the overarching goals of TCN: (a) raise the priority and primacy of tobacco use prevention and control at the national level, (b) foster collaboration with national partners, and (c) support the needs of state and territorial tobacco program managers and staff.

In step-one, participants were assigned teams to each of the two leading issues. Teams were charged with developing an action plan consisting of (a) a goal statement, (b) set objectives, (c) action steps to achieve objectives, (d) the lead, resources, and timeline for each action step, and (e) critical success factors to determine if expectations have been met. Teams worked in the construct of the newly drafted overarching goals of TCN, its resources, strengths and limitations, and developing action steps that are reasonable and doable.

In step-two of the process, the participants reconvened and each team presented a draft action plan and critical success factors. Participants engaged in discussion following each presentation and changes and adjustments were made and consensus achieved.

## **Network Structure Action Plan**

**Goal**—Develop a structure that is consistent with TCN goals and purpose

### **Objectives**

1. Rewrite the TCN by-laws by December 31, 2005.
2. Develop a committee structure.
3. Determine best structure for addressing program managers' needs (e.g. regional structure, policy calls, Tobacco Free Press).
4. Look for "home" for advocacy functions.
5. Foster collaboration with national partners by improving visibility to be recognized as a national partner.

### **Critical Success Factors—Network Structure**

1. By December 31, 2005, TCN By-Laws will be rewritten to accurately reflect the new direction of the TCN.
2. By October 25, 2005, TCN structure will be finalized.
3. Ongoing—TCN Officers and Coordinator engage in quarterly discussions/meetings with national partners, to find a home for advocacy and increase visibility of TCN.

## **Marketing Action Plan**

**Goal**—Establish TCN as a voice of state tobacco control programs

### **Objectives**

1. During FY 06, increase participation in TCN by state program managers.
2. Engage national partners in TCN.
3. Work with CDC Project Officers to Promote TCN.

### **Critical Success Factors—Marketing**

1. By September 30, information packets for CDC Project Officers, national partners, and new TCN members will be developed.
2. By December 31, 2006, membership participation will have increased, as evidenced by: submission and/or response to Help Your Peers; participation in annual business meeting; contribution to Tobacco Free Press; follow-through of specified role in TCN.
3. Ongoing—TCN Officers and Coordinator engage in quarterly discussions/meetings with national partners, to find a home for advocacy and increase visibility of TCN.

In the final step of part-two, four participants volunteered to draft the goals and objectives of the remaining critical issues: Communication/Programming, Advocacy, and Membership. Following discussion, participants agreed that Advocacy was a function of other overarching issues and initially addressed in the Network Structure Action Plan.

## **Communication/Programming Action Plan**

**Goal**—Offer useful services and resources to state tobacco control program staff and enhance information-sharing between programs

### **Objectives**

1. Promote peer communication among and between program managers and staff.
2. Inform TCN members of current events in tobacco control.
3. Communicate with membership on a regular, monthly basis.
4. Provide support to new program managers.
5. Provide technical assistance to program staff.
6. Recognize outstanding programs and their managers.

### **Critical Success Factors—Communication/Programming**

1. By August 15, 2005, an independent bulletin board will be live.
2. By December 31, 2005, at least five new program managers will be matched with mentors, via the mentoring program.
3. At the 2006 World Conference, the Network will host a reception to recognize outstanding Program Managers.

## **Membership Action Plan**

**Goal**—Actively recruit and maintain participation in TCN

### **Objectives**

1. Solidify membership structure.
2. Recruit one active contact per state to populate working committees.
3. Communicate with membership on a monthly basis.
4. Create a message board.
5. Create recognition program.

### **Critical Success Factors—Membership**

1. By August 15, 2005, an independent bulletin board will be live.
2. By May 31, 2006, membership participation will have increased, as evidenced by: submission and/or response to Help Your Peers; participation in annual business meeting; contribution to Tobacco Free Press; follow-through of specified role in TCN.
3. By May 31, 2006, committee structure will be in place and representatives recruited.