Shareholder Advocacy and Tobacco

Trinity Health Shareholder Advocacy program advances the organization's mission and core values by harnessing influence as shareowners in Fortune 500 companies to improve corporate decision-making on matters of personal and public health, including smoking and tobacco usage.

Based on the ethical premise that investment decisions are made not solely for financial advantage, but can also generate returns that produce economic prosperity, embrace environmental stewardship and enhance social responsibility, our dedication to Shareholder Advocacy is also reflective of our commitment to Catholic health care.

Tobacco Shareholder Advocacy at Trinity Health

General Health
Trinity Health shareholder resolutions have addressed a variety of issues with tobacco companies, including:
- Use of packet inserts to list ingredients in cigarettes.
- Encourage regulations and legislation to prohibit smoking in public places.
- End advertising, marketing and sale of cigarettes using descriptor such as “light”, “ultralight” and “mild”.
- Test and measure human health risks of filters.
- Remove characterizing flavors from cigarettes.
- Develop educational materials for persons with low-incomes and/or less formal education on health impacts of tobacco.

Glamorization of Smoking
Trinity Health and other shareholders have joined the public health community to ask for restrictions to and the elimination of smoking depictions in movies, especially those directed at children. These actions include:
- Issuing an “R” rating for all new movies that depict smoking.
- Certification of no pay-offs to depict tobacco.
- Strong anti-smoking ads in theaters and on DVDs.
- No tobacco brand imagery in scenes.

As a result of efforts by investors and by the public health community, all major studios have adopted policies on tobacco depictions. In 2015, Disney announced that all its youth-rated films would be smoke-free.

Due to the inconsistent implementation of studios’ tobacco policies, however, Trinity Health recommends an industry-wide standard that would eliminate tobacco in all youth-rated films. In addition, shareholders meet at least once a year with the major studios to monitor implementation of their policies and to press for support for an industry-wide standard.

April 2016
Environmental Tobacco/Smoke

Tobacco Usage in Restaurants
• Trinity Health engaged in shareholder efforts with restaurants and in 2001 Wendy’s adopted a policy prohibiting smoking in its restaurants.

Tobacco sales in pharmacies
• Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility (ICCR) member organizations, including Trinity Health, began addressing pharmacies (Walmart and Melville) about tobacco sales as early as 1991, with a shareholder proposal filed at CVS in 1997.
• In December 2012, Trinity Health joined other ICCR members in a renewed effort to eliminate tobacco sales in drug stores by participating in the shareholder dialogue team, and met with CVS leadership in the summer of 2013. Trinity Health was also involved in dialogue that year with Walgreens and RiteAid, asking them to stop selling tobacco.
• The shareholders held two meetings with Walgreens through spring 2014. In the Walgreens engagement, shareholders’ expectations that Walgreens would take action have not yet materialized.
• CVS Caremark announced on February 5, 2014 that it would stop selling tobacco products by October 2014. Shareholder advocacy played a key role in the wider effort by the public health community to effect this change.
• In January 2016, a representative from Trinity Health attended the Walgreens annual shareholder meeting to ask the CEO when the company would stop selling tobacco. The CEO responded that they are regularly reviewing their sales practices.

Additional Efforts
• Issued shareholder proposal at Altria, requesting the company analyze and report on the potential health consequences of all harmful liquids, additives and chemicals in all products, including e-cigarettes.
• Issued a resolution with Philip Morris International asking the company to develop a human rights policy that includes respect for the human right to health, and to ensure that its global and national lobbying and marketing practices are not undermining the efforts of sovereign countries to protect their citizens’ health.

Additional Accomplishments
• RJR Nabisco stopped promoting "Joe Camel" in 1998; and in 2000 Philip Morris agreed to support legislation to ban self-service displays of tobacco products in retail outlets.

Advocacy & Public Policy
In addition to shareholder advocacy efforts, Trinity Health also actively takes part in a number of public policy opportunities at both the state and federal level designed to reduce and eliminate smoking. In 2015, Trinity Health took up a nation-wide campaign to support, introduce and help shepherd Tobacco 21 legislation in many states within its footprint. Engaging in grassroots activities at the community level via its Ministries, Trinity Health is working to increase the legal smoking age to 21, thereby reducing access and availability of smoking products to children 18 years of age and younger.

For further information email sri@trinity-health.org

April 2016