

Over six thousand Thais die from secondhand smoke annually

Bangkok, 13 December 2017. Second hand smoke kills 6,500 Thais each year from cancer, heart attack, stroke and chronic respiratory diseases. There is no risk-free level of secondhand smoke exposure—even brief exposure can be harmful to health. The only way to fully protect nonsmokers is to eliminate smoking in all homes, worksites, and public places.

“Deaths from secondhand smoke are completely avoidable” said Dr Daniel Kertesz, WHO Representative to Thailand. “Smoke free homes and workplaces can help reduce the harms associated with secondhand smoke exposure among nonsmokers, prevent the uptake of smoking among youth and decrease social approval of smoking” Dr Kertez added.

As a result of government’s strong tobacco control laws, exposure to second hand smoke in enclosed public places has declined notably over the years. However, secondhand smoke continues to harm Thai children. A 2015 survey by WHO and Ministry of Public Health found that one out of three Thai school children were exposed to secondhand smoke at home.

But it’s just not children who would benefit from smoke free environments. Nonsmoking adults including women are also at risk from secondhand smoke exposure at homes and workplaces. According to survey from the National Statistic Office in 2014, approximately 15.2 million Thai nonsmokers were exposed to second hand smoke in their homes. Queen Sirikit National Institute of Child Health, ThaiHealth, ASH Thailand and their networks have been working diligently on the public campaign named “Smoke Free Home” in order to raise public awareness on the harm of secondhand smoke and make their home free from tobacco.

In line with the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control FCTC, Thailand’s recently enforced Tobacco Products Control Act 2017 stipulates strong measures to curb tobacco use and exposure to second hand smoke. All Thai citizens must take responsibility to protect themselves and their families from second hand smoke by: making their homes and vehicles smoke-free; teaching their children to stay away from second hand smoke, and; being a role model by not smoking or using any type of tobacco product.

Tobacco use continues to be the single most important risk factor of preventable deaths in Thailand with over 51,000 deaths from active smoking each year. The economic burden of tobacco related diseases from smoking alone costs the Thai society 75 billion baht or 0.8% of GDP each year. Globally, there are 7 million deaths from tobacco annually, including 890,000 from secondhand smoke.

For more information, contact

WHO Thailand: Ms. Kanpirom Wiboonpanich at kanpirom@who.int

Tel. 02 547 0121