

# Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations & Coordination

## Revised Press Release

### Measures a foot to curb prevalence of tobacco use in the country : Health Minister

**Islamabad, 31-08-2018:** Federal Minister for National Health Services Aamer Mehmood Kiani said that tobacco use is a major cause of death in Pakistan and this Ministry will take every measure to save lives of people of Pakistan from these deadly products. The Minister took a briefing on Tobacco Control Cell in this office today.

The Minister said that coordination would be made with Ministry of Finance to raise taxes on cigarettes. He further said that Provincial Chief Ministers would be requested to ensure enforcement of tobacco control laws in particular enforcement of legislation on Pictorial Health Warning on cigarette packs. He also directed to launch awareness campaign on hazards of smoking and for promoting tobacco cessation and quitting services. He emphasized on conducting a comprehensive survey to collect data on health indicators including tobacco.

**The Project Manager** briefed the minister on tobacco control situation in Pakistan. He was informed that almost 24 million adults currently use tobacco in any form in Pakistan. Tobacco Control Cell (TCC) had taken measures to reduce prevalence of tobacco use in the country, in accordance with its mandate. In this regard, TCC notified new enhanced pictorial health warning on cigarette packs and outers, banned sale of loose cigarettes sticks, banned import of tobacco and non-tobacco sheesha and related substances, banned tobacco advertisement in print, electronic and outdoor media, banned cigarette packs having less than 20 cigarettes, illegalized designated smoking areas / smoking rooms, declared public places 100% smoke-free, raised awareness among masses, and built capacity of authorized persons to support enforcement.

**The Technical Head TCC** highlighted that there were challenges in functioning of tobacco control in Pakistan especially availability of low-priced cigarettes. He informed that TCC had already solicited support of PEMRA for airing tobacco control messages as public service message. He also presented the way forward and future plans. He suggested to ensure implementation of legislation on pictorial health warning on cigarette packs. He further proposed to implement Tobacco Vanda Act, 1958 to regulate the sale of tobacco products.

The Minister assured that every possible measures would be taken to reduce prevalence of tobacco use in the country and save lives of people of Pakistan.

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