

Anti-Smoking Media Campaigns in three Marzes of Armenia

June 15. Yerevan. A presentation describing anti-smoking media campaigns, implemented in three marzes of Armenia, will take place on June 16, 2006 in the Golden Tulip Hotel in Yerevan.

In August 2005, three international cancer charities — the American Cancer Society (ACS), Cancer Research UK, and the International Union Against Cancer (UICC) — awarded an advocacy fellowship to Dr. Narine Movsisyan. The intent of this fellowship was to facilitate anti-smoking media projects in Armenia. Dr. Movsisyan is a leading Armenian tobacco control advocate and a Project Coordinator at the Center for Health Services Research and Development at the American University of Armenia. Dr. Movsisyan's efforts have also been supported by an IREX/ECA social marketing training grant.

In cooperation with “Internews”, a non-governmental media support organization, the Center for Health Services Research and Development at the American University of Armenia works with journalists to deepen their understanding of the real threats posed by the tobacco epidemic in Armenia. The current project focuses on building capacity among journalists working in marzes of Armenia.

An intensive one-and-half day training session on tobacco control issues took place in Tsakhkadzor in December 2005, followed by a competition open to all marz TV companies. A professional jury selected four winning proposals for the implementation of anti-smoking media campaigns in three marzes of Armenia. The companies selected were: Lori TV (Vanadzor), Fortuna (Stepanavan), ALT (Armavir), and Khustup TV (Kapan). The on-site training provided by the Internews experts facilitated the creation of anti-smoking media campaigns in these marzes.

According to Dr. Narine Movsisyan, “The heavy burden of smoking to the Armenian society is yet to be largely recognized in Armenia. Smoking is the primary risk factor for the leading causes of death in Armenia, namely cardiovascular disease and cancer. We are loosing about 2000 human lives due to smoking each year in Armenia and these premature deaths are totally preventable. We should spread the knowledge about risks of smoking and the risks of exposure to tobacco smoke to everyone, especially to people in rural areas of Armenia, who are already disadvantaged in terms of access to information”.

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