Every year on May 31 the World Health Organization (WHO) celebrates World No Tobacco Day. The 2013 theme for World No Tobacco Day is “ban tobacco advertising, promotion, and sponsorship.” A comprehensive ban on tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship alone could account for a 7 percent decrease in tobacco use. Comprehensive bans work to counteract the deceptive and misleading nature of tobacco marketing campaigns, the unavoidable exposure of youth to tobacco marketing, the failure of the tobacco industry to self regulate and the ineffectiveness of partial bans.

**TOBACCO ADVERTISING IN THE UNITED STATES**

In 2010, the major cigarette manufacturers in the U.S. spent $8 billion on advertising and promotion for cigarettes. More than 80 percent of these funds was spent on price discounts for cigarette retailers or wholesalers in order to reduce the cost of cigarettes to consumers. In 2010, the major smokeless tobacco manufacturers spent more than $400 million on advertising and promotion for smokeless tobacco products. Slightly more than 20 percent of these funds were spent on price discounts.

**SPECIAL PROMOTION USER DEMOGRAPHICS**

The Illinois Adult Tobacco Survey (ATS) asked cigarette users “the last time you bought cigarettes did you take advantage of coupons, rebates, buy 1 get 1 free, 2 for 1, or any other special promotions for cigarettes.” Overall, 17 percent of cigarette users had used a special promotion in order to buy cigarettes. The demographics of the smokers who used special promotions is shown below.
YOUTH ANTI-TOBACCO MEDIA EXPOSURE
The Illinois Youth Tobacco Survey (YTS) asked students “during the past 30 days, about how often have you seen or heard commercials on TV, the Internet, or on the radio about the dangers of cigarette smoking?” The number of students who said they have seen anti-tobacco ads has continued to decline since 2002.

Youth Tobacco Advertising Exposure on the Internet

Students were asked on the YTS “when you are using the Internet, how often do you see ads for tobacco products?” The number of students who have been exposed to tobacco ads on the Internet has remained around 40 percent since 2002.

YOUTH TOBACCO AD EXPOSURE IN CONVENIENCE STORES
Students were asked on the YTS “when you go to a convenience store or gas station, how often do you see ads for cigarettes and other tobacco products or items that have tobacco company names or pictures on them?” The number of students who said they see ads at convenience stores or gas stations has remained steady at more than 90 percent since 2005.

Tobacco advertising, promotion, and sponsorship normalize tobacco use and hinder efforts to educate people about the harms of tobacco use. It strengthens the misperception that everyone uses tobacco and that there is no harm associated with tobacco use. Comprehensive bans on these activities are the only way to prevent this misperception.