

## **FDA ORGANIZES ANTI-TABACCO SENSITIZATION HEALTH WALK**



The Food and Drugs Authority (FDA), as part of its activities to commemorate this year's World No-Tobacco Day (WNTD), organised a health walk within the Madina metropolis on Saturday, 25th May 2019.

The Health Walk aimed at creating awareness on the dangers and negative effects of using tobacco and tobacco products on individuals and also, its impact on the national economy.

Mrs. Olivia Boateng, the Head of Tobacco and Substances of Abuse Department of the FDA, addressing participants, reiterated the FDA's stance that there is no safe form of tobacco use. She stressed that tobacco, whether smoked, chewed or sniffed contains nicotine which is highly addictive and over 7000 carcinogens that are deadly and that there is no benefits for tobacco use.

She further noted that smoking of shisha and e-cigarette is on the increase and has become a trending issue especially among the youth in Ghana; and therefore the need to strongly disabuse the perception and misconception that e-cigarettes and shisha use are fashionable, trendy and not as bad as cigarettes since they all contain nicotine and other toxics that are very addictive and affect every part of the body.

For non-smokers, Mrs. Boateng added that those exposed to second-hand smoking adsorb nicotine and other compounds just as the smokers do. Second-hand smoking therefore has the same levels of harmful effects.

The FDA has started a campaign against shisha and e-cigarette use in the country and it is expected that the youth would assist in carrying the message to their colleagues.

Some of the key tobacco control measures the FDA is implementing include the prohibition of smoking in public places, the introduction on pictorial health warnings on tobacco products, points of sale health warning, as well as the prohibition of the advertising, promotion and sponsorship by tobacco companies.

Others are minimum age restriction, public education against tobacco use and collaboration with relevant bodies to check illicit tobacco trade.

Dr. Kyei-Faried of the Disease Control Prevention Department of the Ghana Health Service (GHS) and Focal Person for Tobacco Control emphasized that the campaign against tobacco smoking and exposure to second-hand smoke, increase the risk of contracting many lung diseases, and in the process 90% of lung cancer deaths and approximately 8 out of 10 deaths caused by chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), including emphysema and chronic bronchitis are caused by smoking.

He lamented that, tobacco use costs national economies enormously through increased health-care costs and decreased productivity. It worsens health inequalities and poverty, as the poorest people spend less on essentials such as food, education and health care.

Additionally, he urged students to stay away from shisha use as it is more dangerous, addictive and poses serious health hazards to the body.

Tobacco use is a threat to any person, regardless of gender, age, race, cultural or educational background. It brings suffering, disease and death, impoverishing families and national economies.

A representative of the World Health Organization (WHO), Madam Joana Ansong, urged a change in the lifestyle of the youth because of the negative repercussion to enable them live a healthier life.

Participants for the health walk included representative from the World Health Organization (WHO), Ministry of Health (MOH), Food and Drugs Authority (FDA), Ghana Health Service (GHS), Officers from the Ghana Police Service, journalist, some selected Senior High School (SHS) students and the Vision for Alternative Development (VALD) – a member of the Inter Agency Committee on Tobacco Control.