



TPackSS: Tobacco Pack Surveillance System Cigarette Health Warning Label Compliance



Philippines – 2016

As of November 2016, the Philippines' health warning labels (HWLs) – which fulfill the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) Article 11 minimum requirements – included the following:

1. 50 percent coverage of the front and back of the pack
2. Text warning displayed on contrasting background color
3. 12 different tobacco use health warning messages, in Filipino



Front of pack



Back of pack

The Philippines' HWL size tied for 13th in the WHO Western Pacific Region and tied for 57th globally in 2016¹. The Philippines meets FCTC guidelines for warning size on the front and back of the pack.

TPackSS assesses health warning label compliance as HWL requirements improve in countries. In November 2016, TPackSS collected cigarette packs in Manila, Cebu City, and Davao City using a systematic protocol.² Cigarette packs were assessed for compliance with the current HWL policy in place at the time of data collection.³

Article 11 of the World Health Organization's (WHO) FCTC requires that Parties implement effective tobacco packaging and labeling measures to increase public awareness of the negative health impacts of tobacco products.

TPackSS systematically collected a sample of 83 unique cigarette packs that displayed the HWLs mandated by the Philippines. Packs were assessed for compliance with three key requirements.³

Warning Location

100 percent of the packs had a health warning in the lower portion of the front and back of the pack.



Front of pack



Back of pack

Warning Size

90 percent of packs had a health warning that covered 50 percent of both the front and back of the pack.



Front of pack



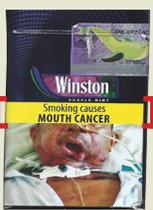
Back of pack

Warning Label Elements

84 percent of packs had the required health warning text in Filipino on the front and English on the back, with no border or frame.



Front of pack



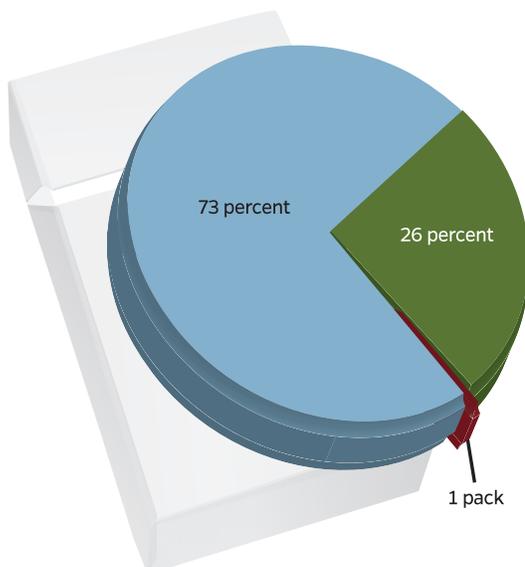
Back of pack

77%

of the unique cigarette packs assessed were compliant with the three key HWL requirements.

Area of Concern: Health Warning Text Size

The Implementing Rules and Regulations of Republic Act No. 10643 for The Philippine Graphic Health Warnings Law states that the text shall use no more than twenty percent of the entire area of the graphic warning. No distinction is made between the area of the text box or text itself. The lack of distinction allows for the inconsistent application of warnings across tobacco products in the Philippines. The packs below demonstrate the wide variation seen in applying the text size requirement.



Breakdown of packs collected and presence of required HWLs*

Total number of unique packs collected: 114

- **73 percent** of total packs had a current mandated HWL (n=83)
- **26 percent** of total packs had a previous text only Philippine HWL (n=30)
- **1 pack** had a non-Philippine HWL

*Percentages do not add to 100 percent because of rounding.

Approximately a quarter of all packs collected in the Philippines had a previous text only Philippine HWL. The Philippines' health warning label policy should require the recall or removal of all packs with a previous text only HWL. Exposure to best practice HWLs can improve the effectiveness of HWLs in the Philippines.

¹ Canadian Cancer Society. Cigarette Package Health Warnings: International Status Report, Fourth Edition. Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids; 2014. http://global.tobaccofreekids.org/files/pdfs/en/WL_status_report_en.pdf. Accessed May 25, 2016.

² Smith K, Washington C, Brown J, Vadhais A, Kroart L, Ferguson J, Cohen J. The Tobacco Pack Surveillance System: A Protocol for Assessing Health Warning Compliance, Design Features, and Appeals of Tobacco Packs Sold in Low- and Middle-Income Countries. *JMIR Public Health Surveill.* 2015;1(2). doi: 10.2196/publichealth.4616.

³ Implementing Rules and Regulations of Republic Act No. 10643 "An Act to Effectively Instill Health Consciousness Through Graphic Health Warnings on Tobacco Products," February 9, 2016, Republic of the Philippines; Republic Act No. 10643, An Act to Effectively Instill Health Consciousness Through Graphic Health Warnings on Tobacco Products, July 15, 2014, Republic of the Philippines.

About TPackSS

The Institute for Global Tobacco Control (IGTC) at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health developed the Tobacco Pack Surveillance System (TPackSS) project to monitor whether required health warnings on tobacco packages are being implemented as intended, and to identify pack features and marketing appeals that might violate or detract from country tobacco packaging laws in these countries.