

NSTEP® (National Spit Tobacco Education Project)

In 1994, alarmed by the number of close friends and baseball colleagues who were suffering from oral cancer related to spit tobacco use, as well as the continued prevalence of spit tobacco by Major League Baseball players, Joe Garagiola, along with Neil Romano, approached the America's Fund for Dental Education in an effort to reach out and educate youth about the dangers of spit tobacco use. This effort, which became known as the National Spit Tobacco Education Program, initially was proposed as a public health messaging campaign aimed at school-based messaging vehicles such as the Weekly Reader® and Channel One®.

In 2012, as part of Oral Health America's NSTEP partnership with the Knock Tobacco Out of the Park Coalition, Major League Baseball and the Major League Baseball Players Association, players, managers and coaches agreed to no longer carry a tobacco tin or package in their uniforms or on their bodies at games, or any time that fans are in the ballpark. This initiative marked a historic opportunity for players to improve their health and become better role models for millions of young fans as well as a major victory for the coalition.

NSTEP OF TODAY – CELEBRATING 20 YEARS

2014 marked the 20th anniversary of the NSTEP program. While much has been accomplished in two decades, the need for continued efforts and a renewed sense of focus have never been greater. The recent death of Tony Gwynn, Baseball Hall of Famer, at the age of 54 due to oral cancer which he attributed to his long-time use of spit tobacco, has once again brought global attention to this preventable health crisis. OHA remains committed to educating Americans, particularly young Americans, about the dangers of spit tobacco, helping users quit and bringing national awareness to this topic.

Today, NSTEP has three components a partnership with Little League Baseball®, public service announcements and the development and marketing of low cost educational materials for the prevention and cessation of spit tobacco use for public health and educational outreach programs, further detailed below.

I. Little League Baseball World Series

OHA continues its 14-year relationship with the Little League World Series (LLWS), delivering the message to over one million Little League participants, their families and their coaches every year around the dangers of spit tobacco use. These activities are centered on events surrounding the Little League World Series, including a slogan contest, and culminating in a trip to the Little League World Series tournament where OHA has a trading pin and booth presence at the series in Williamsport, PA.

a. **NSTEP Slogan Contest**

- i. Contest announcement was distributed to more than one million Little Leaguers nationwide
- ii. Winning slogan will best demonstrate knowledge about the consequences of using spit tobacco
- iii. Custom-designed, limited edition trading pins promoting NSTEP distributed at the LLWS

- iv. The slogan winner and a family member receive a two day, all-expense paid trip to the LLWS to participate in an on-field award presentation and a \$500 cash award
- v. The winner's Little League baseball team receives a \$500 cash award

b) Little League Baseball World Series (LLWS)

- i. The World Series is held in Williamsport, PA, in August
- ii. Receives over 350,000 visitors including the Little League players, families and tourists from across the country and the world
- iii. All games are nationally televised on ESPN and ABC

c) Oral Health America Booth at the LLWS

- i. Provides a memorable interactive experience for visitors
- ii. Educates children and adults about the dangers of spit tobacco, the importance of regular brushing and frequent dental check-ups
- iii. Distributes oral care products and educational materials that build awareness regarding the dangers of spit tobacco and the importance of good oral health

II. John Danks Public Service Announcements

John Danks, starting pitcher for the Chicago White Sox, has supported NSTEP since 2010. He has recorded several PSAs about the dangers of smokeless tobacco and allows OHA to use his image for our “Spit Can” brochure and the other educational materials. The PSA is broadcast at U.S. Cellular Field, home of the Chicago White Sox, on the JumboTron, at the Little League World Series venue and disseminated through OHA social media efforts.

III. Educational Materials

Developed in previous years through funding from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, OHA has produced several brochures, pictures, posters, quitting tips and videos for prevention and cessation of spit tobacco use. Due to the earlier relationship between NSTEP and Major League Baseball, many of the pieces feature baseball players. As these materials were originally produced several years ago, OHA is looking to update this material with current information.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information about Oral Health America's work to reduce spit tobacco use and improve oral health, please visit nstep.org or contact Brittany Wright at 312-836-9900 or brittany.wright@oralhealthamerica.org.

®NSTEP is a registered trademark of Oral Health America

®Little League is a registered trademark