Health Promotion -
Why is it so difficult to get people on board?

Prof Prakit Vathesatogkit
Global leader in tobacco control, and Founder of the Thailand Health Promotion Foundation (ThaiHealth)

Twenty seven years after the landmark announcement of the Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion, this seemingly very useful strategy to improve the health of the public still fails to capture attention from the majority of the health professional and government officials. There is a lack of clear understanding of the scope and differences between traditional service-based “health promotion” and the Ottawa Charter concept of “health promotion”. Health care providers have not seriously addressed health promotion in their daily practice, and governments have not adequately responded to the call for the implementation of health promotion strategies enshrined under the Ottawa Charter.

Professor Prakit Vathesatogkit has won numerous tobacco control awards including the first Luther Terry Award for exemplary leadership in tobacco control in 2000. As a Respiratory physician he became Dean of the Ramathibodi Medical School of Mahidol University, Thailand. He has served as executive secretary to the Action on Smoking and Health Foundation, Thailand since 1986. He was a key figure in establishing and advising ThaiHealth in 2001, a statutory autonomous state agency, similar to VicHealth. He has since established the South East Asian Tobacco Control Alliance (SEATCA) a leading tobacco control NGO now working in Laos, Vietnam, Indonesia, Philippines and Cambodia. He was popularly elected to the Thai Senate in 2006 and served as the Secretary General of the International Network for Health Promotion Foundations from 2011-2013. He now provides assistance and advice to many countries on policy advocacy for Tobacco Control, as well as assisting in the drafting of tobacco control related legislation.