

Tackling Tobacco Control in SA for Better Oral Health





Introduction



Objectives:

- Highlight the connection between tobacco use and oral health issues.
- Discuss the prevalence and impact of oral cancer linked to tobacco.
- Highlight the necessity for advocacy and outline effective strategies.
- Detail POHF's ongoing initiatives in combating tobacco-related oral health problems.



Tobacco use and oral health



Impact of Tobacco on Oral Health:

- Increased risk of gum disease, tooth loss, and oral infections.
- Staining of teeth and halitosis (bad breath).
- Delayed healing after dental procedures.
- Contributes significantly to oral cancers.
- Reduced saliva flow → Dry mouth → Development of dental decay.



Tobacco use and general health



Impact of Tobacco Use on General Health:

Systemic Effects:

- Cardiovascular, respiratory diseases, and compromised immune function.
- Increased risk of various cancers beyond the oral cavity.

Interconnection:

- Oral health is a mirror to overall health; issues in the mouth can signal or contribute to broader health problems.



Oral cancer in South Africa



- Oral cancer accounts for a significant portion of head and neck cancers in South Africa.
- **Main risk factors:** Tobacco use, alcohol consumption, HPV infection.
- High prevalence among disadvantaged communities, particularly those with limited access to healthcare services.
- Late-stage diagnosis due to beliefs, lack of awareness and limited screening programs.
- High treatment costs and limited access to specialised oncology care.



Oral cancer in South Africa



- Limited resources for early and accurate detection contributing to inconsistent data on oral cancer burden - underreporting and incorrect reporting.
- Inequitable oral cancer outcomes linked to socioeconomic and demographic factors.



Need for Advocacy in Tobacco Control



Challenges:

- High prevalence of tobacco use despite known health risks.
- Emergence of alternative tobacco products e.g. e-cigarettes (popular amongst the young population – direct marketing).

Advocacy Goals:

- Implement stricter tobacco control policies (**TEDSCB**).
- Increase public awareness about the risks associated with all forms of tobacco.
- Promote cessation programs and support systems.



Some impactful strategies for consideration



- Enforce higher taxes on tobacco & related products.
- Strict controls on marketing, sale and usage (**TEDSCB**)
- Health education and promotion programmes
- Community workshops - community lead journalism, research and monitoring.
- Collaboration with schools, workplaces, and community centers.
- Accessible cessation programs offering counseling and medical assistance.
- Utilisation of digital platforms for wider reach and support.



Our role as a the POHF



- Advocacy and awareness campaigns
- Conducting workshops and seminars on tobacco's impact on oral health.
- Partnering with media outlets to broadcast educational content.
- Capacity building initiatives for early detection and cessation.
- Organising community awareness and screening campaigns (upcoming).



Leveraging collective power for impact.



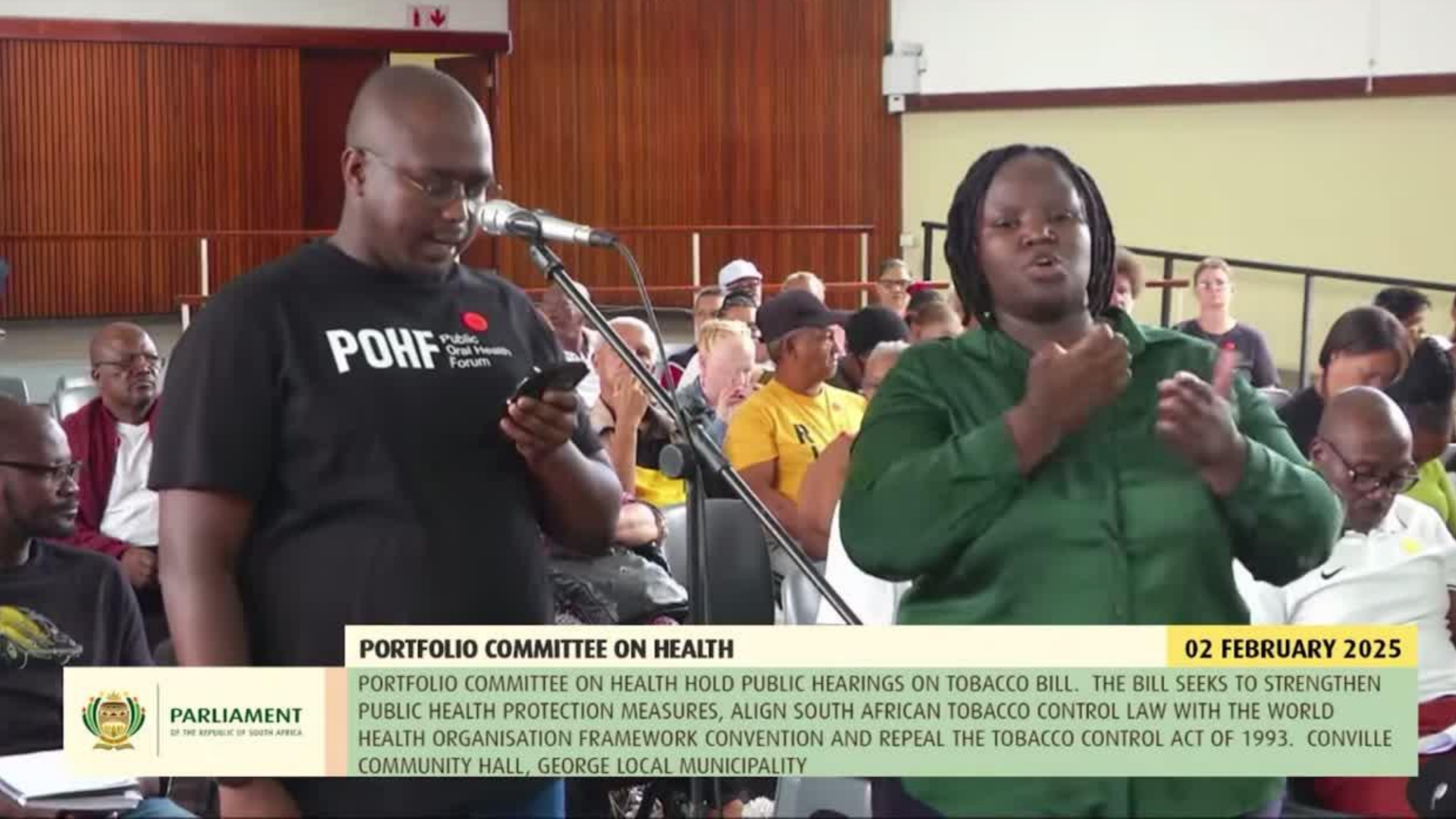
- Working alongside health departments, NGOs, and educational institutions.
- Sharing resources and best practices for wider impact.
- Case studies highlighting effective community interventions.
- Personal testimonials from successful initiatives.
- Narrative building and story-telling sharing, e.g. community / healthcare user experiences.



Conclusion



- Tobacco use poses severe risks to oral and general health, with rising cases of oral cancer in South Africa.
- Comprehensive tobacco control requires policy enforcement, public education, and accessible cessation support (PHC).
- Encourage community members and activists to participate actively in advocacy efforts.
- Support POHF and partner organisations in their mission to reduce tobacco use and improve oral health outcomes.



PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

02 FEBRUARY 2025



PARLIAMENT
OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON HEALTH HOLD PUBLIC HEARINGS ON TOBACCO BILL. THE BILL SEEKS TO STRENGTHEN PUBLIC HEALTH PROTECTION MEASURES, ALIGN SOUTH AFRICAN TOBACCO CONTROL LAW WITH THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION FRAMEWORK CONVENTION AND REPEAL THE TOBACCO CONTROL ACT OF 1993. CONVILLE COMMUNITY HALL, GEORGE LOCAL MUNICIPALITY