



會 學 醫 港 香  
*The Hong Kong Medical Association*

FOUNDED IN 1920•INCORPORATED IN 1960 AS A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE  
MEMBER OF WORLD MEDICAL ASSOCIATION AND CONFEDERATION OF MEDICAL ASSOCIATIONS IN ASIA & OCEANIA

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**The Hong Kong Medical Association**

**Strongly Supports Proposed Strengthening of Tobacco Control Measures**

As a representative body of the medical professionals in Hong Kong, the Hong Kong Medical Association (HKMA) has been actively promoting and supporting major tobacco control initiatives, including the various amendments to the Smoking (Public Health) Ordinance, over the past two decades. While the local smoking prevalence has reduced gradually from 23.3% in early 1982 to 10.7% in 2012, we are still seeing increasing number of patients suffering from various tobacco-related diseases. Further measures are required to protect our younger generations from the grave harms of tobacco, including second-hand cigarette smoke and e-cigarettes. In line with our mission to safeguard the health of community, we support, without any reservation, the government's proposal to scale up implementation of smoking control measures as mentioned in the LC Paper No. CB(2)1456/14-15(07):

**1. Health Warnings on Cigarette Products**

From overseas experiences, the introduction of plain cigarette packets can help to reduce some people's urge to smoke and even cut smoking rates. Moreover, there are studies showing that large, comprehensive warnings on cigarette packages are more likely to be noticed and rated as effective by smokers. We therefore support to enlarge the size of pictorial health warnings from 50% to at least 85% of the cigarette pack area. Also, the number of health warning format should be increased from 6 to 12. Health warning message "Tobacco kills up to half of its users" and quit smoking hotline 1833183 should be printed on the cigarette pack.

**2. Smoking Ban at Bus Interchange at Tunnel Portal Area**

We support for a smoke-free environment and welcome the decision to extend the non-smoking zones to the eight designated Bus Interchange at Tunnel Portal area:

- (a) Cross-Harbour Tunnel;
- (b) Lion Rock Tunnel;
- (c) Shing Mun Tunnels;
- (d) Eastern Harbour Crossing;
- (e) Western Harbour Crossing;
- (f) Tate's Cairn Tunnel;
- (g) Tai Lam Tunnel; and
- (h) Tsing Sha Highway (between Sha Tin Heights Tunnel and Eagle's Nest Tunnel).

This will further enhance and protect the health of workers and other citizens from exposure to second-hand smoking in our over-crowded environment.



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### 3. Prohibiting e-cigarettes

E-cigarettes are the commonest prototype of electronic nicotine delivery system (ENDS) that do not burn or use tobacco leaves but instead vaporise a solution the user then inhales. According to a recent report from the World Health Organisation, the ENDS solutions and emissions contain, in addition to nicotine, other chemicals, some of which are considered to be toxicants. The therapeutic effect of e-cigarettes on smoking cessation has NOT been clearly established and they may potentially serve as a gateway for addicted children to switch to cigarette. For smoking, e-cigarettes may also bring re-normalisation effect by making smoking-like behavior attractive and perpetuate the smoking problems.

The HKMA therefore strongly supports to prohibit import, manufacture, sale, distribution and advertising of e-cigarettes to reduce the risk of exposing non-smokers and teenagers to them. It is imperative to ban the sale of e-cigarettes in convenience stores, trendy shopping centres and even through social media. For e-cigarettes or ENDS intended to be used as a tool for smoking cessation, prior submission of formal proof of efficacy, safety and quality for registration with the Department of Health should be required in line with the registration requirements for other therapeutic agents.