

Ms. Louisa YU,  
Clerk to Panel on Health Services  
Legislative Council Secretariat

20 Jun 2015

Dear Ms. Yu,

Ref: Legislative proposals to strengthen tobacco control

The Hong Kong Lung foundation would support the government's proposal to (a) increase the size of graphical health warnings of tobacco products to at least 85%; (b) implement smoking ban at bus interchanges at tunnel portal areas; and (c) prohibit e-cigarettes.

Since the introduction of graphical health warning in Canada in 2001, its effectiveness in reducing smoking had been consistently demonstrated in various countries. It escalates the public awareness on the health risks of smoking and strengthens the will of current smokers to smoke less and even to stop smoking. While graphical warning has been widely adopted by more than 100 countries now, graphic warnings of larger sizes had been shown to be effective in countries like Australia, Canada, Nepal, Thailand and Uruguay. The use of large-size warnings would enable a more comprehensive description of the various diseases that can be caused by smoking to the public.

Tobacco smoke contains more than 70 carcinogenic chemicals, while second-hand smoke is no less innocent. Nearly 600,000 people in the world die from exposure of second-hand cigarette smoke. As such, every non-smoker should have the right to say "no" to second-hand smoke to protect our health and lives. In fact, the smoking ban should even be further extended to other public places beyond the bus interchange at tunnel portal areas.

E-cigarette is at present being treated as a trendy product rather than a pharmaceutical product in Hong Kong. Also, many smokers have a wrong impression that it is an aid to smoking cessation. In fact, the World Health Organization (WHO) has advised against its use to quit smoking, while the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in USA had also confirmed that e-cigarettes can release several toxic and carcinogenic chemicals. With its growing popularity and the trendy label, e-cigarette would likely be creating an emerging threat in the induction of the cigarette smoking habit, especially among youngsters. As a result, we think that it is now the golden time to impose strict regulations on e-cigarettes before it gets too late.



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Dr. TAM Cheuk Yin  
Chairman, Hong Kong Lung Foundation