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**School of Nursing**



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To the Subcommittee on Smoking (Public Health) (Notice) (Amendment) Order2017 of the Legislative Council:

**Support the Enlargement of Pictorial Health Warnings**

I am writing to show my strong support for the Government proposed measures to strengthen tobacco control by enlarging the pictorial health warnings to at least 85% of the cigarette pack area and increasing the number of forms of health warning to twelve not limited to traditional cigarettes but also to cigars.

Indeed, cigar is the same as traditional cigarette that contains cancer-causing chemicals and toxins which cause harms to nonsmokers and smokers. According to National Cancer Institute (NCI) from the USA, cigars has been proven that the smoke is more toxic than that of traditional cigarette smoke. Nitrosamines released in cigar smoke can cause cancer and higher amount of tar and nicotine are found in cigar. Moreover, cigar is of greater size than that of traditional cigarette so smokers usually consume it at longer time and thus longer duration of burning with second hand (cigar) smoke being released. Besides, cigars and traditional cigarettes are addictive and a single cigar's nicotine amount is similar to a pack of cigarettes'.

Dated back to 40 years ago in 1970s, smoking prevalence rate maintained high and there were no strict tobacco control in Hong Kong. Governmental measures on tobacco control were started since 1980s with the Council on Smoking and Health (COSH) established, to 1990s with prohibition on tobacco advertisement etc. and 2000s with pictorial warnings to be shown on cigarette pack plus great enhancement of tobacco tax. Smoking prevalence rate dropped prominently from over 20% to 10.5% in 2015. It is obvious that each tobacco measure contributes to the continuous reduction rate in smoking prevalence in a step-by-step manner. In addition, increasing the size (from 50% at present to 85%) of warnings on cigarette pack can catch greater attention and allows smokers to know more about the disadvantages of smoking. The pictorial warning on cigarette pack is the first critical health warning to the person who decides to smoke. This can also threaten the youth from getting into smoking or motivate the young smokers to quit as early as possible. These cannot be limited to traditional cigarette only but also need to extend the legislation to cigars and other cigarette packaging.

The proposed measure is an international trend in tobacco control which will effectively reduce the attractiveness of tobacco, motivate more smokers to quit and deter youth from trying the first cigarette.

Yours faithfully,  
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