

Clerk to Subcommittee on Smoking (Public Health) (Notices)
(Amendment) Order 2017
Legislative Council Secretariat
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central, Hong Kong

17th May 2017

Dear Sir/ Madam,

Re: Proposal to amend the health warnings on packets of tobacco products

We at the United Christian Nethersole Community Health Service gladly support the Government to strengthen the tobacco control laws in Hong Kong. We are on a mission to have a healthier community in Hong Kong by improving health care quality and reducing health care disparities. We serve to a diverse range of the ethnic minority communities in Hong Kong who due to their limited language proficiency are unable to fully access the health care system of Hong Kong.

We appeal to the Government and the Legislative council to adopt the Smoking (Public Health) (Notices) (Amendment) Order 2017 which seek to amend the pictorial health warnings and furthermore support its increased size to 85%. We also strongly urge the frequent rotation of various health warnings.

Enlargement of pictorial warnings

Given that the lower socio-economic groups bear a greater burden of morbidity and mortality resulting from tobacco use, pictorial health warnings do not require high levels of literacy. Ethnic minorities in Hong Kong have a huge language barrier therefore having this intervention of larger, clearer and visible pictorial warning will arguable be more effective in communicating the ill effects of smoking. Once these health hazards are understood it can empower them to take their own well informed decision for quitting.

UCN has been serving the ethnic minority community of Hong Kong with a comprehensive smoking cessation programme. According to our experience the EM community has imperfect knowledge about the risks of smoking. So we strongly believe that the frequent rotations of various health warnings will act as channel for disseminating the health related risks leading to a healthy behavioral change.

As I belongs to EM community and as an outreach worker, I observed that the number of EM teenagers taking up smoking at a very early age is increasing. While conducting outreach, I meet quite a lot of EM teenagers gathered in park and some of them are as young as 12 years old smoking and unaware of the harmful effects of smoking on their health. The enlargement of pictorial warning can be used as a prevention method for EM teenagers.

Yours faithfully,
Faizdan Ali

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