

LC Paper No. CB(2)584/16-17(32)

Clerk to Panel on Health Services
Legislative Council Secretariat
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central, Hong Kong

7th January 2017

Dear Sir/ Madam,

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

The United Christian Nethersole Community Health Service has the mission of promoting the health of the community. We strongly support the amendments of pictorial health warning to line up with WHO's call for countries to adopt plain packaging or pictorial warnings covering more than 85% by 2018. We urge the Government and Legislative Councilors to implement the following measures:

- ✧ Enlargement of pictorial health warning to at least 85% of the cigarette pack area. Evidence has proved that larger warnings can educate smokers and public on the health hazards of smoking, and reduce influences of branding of tobacco companies to smokers.
- ✧ Increasing the number of forms of health warning from six to twelve, and adding the quitline 1833 183. We support the proposal of adding new health warnings and more frequent rotation of health warnings to raise the deterring effect to smokers. We suggest that other themes of health message should also be included, e.g. secondhand/ thirdhand smoke affecting family members. In addition, the quitline number should also be displayed at a prominent position in conjunction with the pictorial warnings.
- ✧ Standardizing whole cigarette pack. For transit to plain packaging, we suggest that Government should take into consideration of both outer and inner cigarette pack so as to minimize attractiveness of tobacco products for individual smokers, e.g. not allow slim lipstick of cigarette for female smokers.
- ✧ Devising comprehensive tobacco control policies. According to our experience in promoting smoking cessation in Hong Kong, further expansion of non-smoking areas, raise of tobacco tax are major reasons for smokers to quit. Raising of tobacco tax is especially effective in deterring youth to take up smoking. A study by University of Hong Kong has found that adolescent smoking rates dropped from 6.9% in 2008 to 3.4% in 2010 after tobacco tax rise in 2009; and dropped further to 3.0% in 2012 after another tax rise in 2011. We urge the Government and Legislative Councilors to put forward long-term and comprehensive tobacco control policies as soon as possible.

Thank you for your attention. For any questions, please kindly contact myself at 2357-4008, joycesf.tang@ucn.org.hk.

Yours faithfully,



Joyce S.F. Tang
Medical Director
United Christian Nethersole Community Health Service