



**Letter to Advocate Complete Ban on Electronic Cigarettes**

Dear Chairman of the Panel on Health Services,

Frontline Doctors' Union is writing to advocate a complete ban on electronic cigarettes in Hong Kong, in response to the Government's proposal of regulating the sales of electronic cigarettes.

Electronic cigarettes are harmful to human health both physically and psychologically. They were proven to contain ingredients including formaldehyde, glycerin, nicotine, PAHs, PBDEs, etc. which are carcinogenic and highly addictive. Other chemical ingredients generated during vaporisation largely remain unknown and are still under research currently. Such a product should never be regarded as a tool to tackle tobacco cessation.

Introducing electronic cigarettes to Hong Kong is going to endanger public health especially among teenagers and young adults, since electronic cigarettes directly targets at the youth and non-smokers. Electronic cigarettes marketing themselves as safe, harmless and non-addictive are extremely misleading. On the contrary, it serves as a gateway to smoking, as study in United States found that students who had used electronic cigarettes were more likely to initiate the use of tobacco products after 6 months and 12 months.<sup>(1)</sup> According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, electronic cigarettes use among high school students in the United States in 2015 was almost 9 times as much as the usage in 2011.<sup>(2)</sup> United States is a precedent example of how the situation could get out of control in the near future.

The Government's proposal to regulate the sales of electronic cigarettes should mean the legalisation of the product in Hong Kong which would lead to damage to public health. We hereby pledge the Chairman and Panel to consider a complete ban on electronic cigarettes in Hong Kong.

Reference:

- (1) Leventhal, Adam M., et al. "Association of electronic cigarette use with initiation of combustible tobacco product smoking in early adolescence." *Jama* 314.7 (2015): 700-707.
- (2) E-Cigarette Use Among Youth and Young Adults: A Report of the Surgeon General. 2016. US Department of Health and Human Services.

Yours Sincerely,  
Dr. Catherine KY Wong  
Chairlady of Frontline Doctors' Union

