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The Chairman and the Panel on Health Services

Legislation Council of the Hong Kong Special Administration Region of the People's Republic of China

Appeal to enforce a total ban on e-cigarettes and all forms of new tobacco products

(呼籲強制全面禁止電子煙和所有形式的新煙草產品)

Dear Sir and Madam,

There is a multitude of indisputable evidence that have validated without doubt that tobacco is a leading cause of death and many fatal diseases including cancers, cardio-vascular diseases, as well as organs dysfunctions of individuals who smoke (US Department of Health and Human Services, 2014). 12% of adults die globally because of tobacco use (WHO, 2012). This is equivalent to the deaths of more than 6 million people each year. Secondhand smoke is no less a threat to those who do not use tobacco, including vulnerable beings like babies, children and expectant mother. More than 890,000 people die from secondhand smoke exposure each year (WHO, 2018). Thus, the World Health Organization (WHO) has acknowledged that the tobacco epidemic is one of the biggest public health threats that the world has ever faced (WHO, 2018)

In Hong Kong, we have taken 36 years to reduce the smoking rate from 23.3% in 1982 to 10% this year. That was a tremendous effort made by different parties of our Society. Among all the tobacco control strategies, legislation is generally the most effective tobacco control measure.

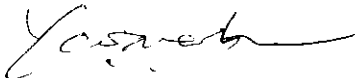
E-cigarettes are devices that heat a liquid into an aerosol that the user inhales. The liquid usually contains nicotine, flavoring, and other additives. The nicotine in e-cigarettes, which is no different in nature from other tobacco product, is as addictive as the ingredients of common cigarettes. It is found that e-cigarette harms the developing brain of the youth, pregnant women, and fetuses (US Department of Health and Human Services, 2016). Furthermore, carcinogens, irritants, and other health hazard products may be released via the vapor when the device is in operation.

In Hong Kong as well as some countries, e-cigarette is more popular among high school students than adults, and it has become a preferred alternative than regular cigarettes (CDC, 2013, Ambrose & et al, 2015; COSH, 2017). The common reasons of using e-cigarettes among youth and young adults include curiosity (Schmidt et al; 2014; Biener & Hargraves, 2015; Sutfin & et

al, 2015), flavorings/taste (Ambrose 2015); users consider it less harmful compared to the traditional cigarettes (Ambrose 2015). However, the youth **does not** use e-cigarettes for quitting / reduction of the traditional cigarette (Schmidt et al; 2014; Tucker & et al, 2014). In addition, e-cigarette use is strongly associated with the use of other tobacco products among the youth and young adults. Thus, we see the trend of youth starter consuming e-cigarettes and the progression to combusted tobacco products.

As the good work done by the HK government in the past to protect people from the harm of tobacco use, I sincerely and strongly demand our Government to concur with some other countries / cities such as Norway, Uruguay and Seychelles and Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia, and Macao **to enforce a total ban on e-cigarettes and all forms of new tobacco products!!**

Sincerely,



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