

Impose Nationwide Ban On Vape And E-Cigarettes — Malaysian Medical Association

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Public health must take precedence over profit, and we cannot allow these harmful products to jeopardise the well-being of future generations.



Malaysian Medical Association president Dr Kalwinder Singh Khaira speaks at the Industry Leadership Summit 2024 in Kuala Lumpur on October 10, 2024, organised by the Galen Centre for Health and Social Policy and supported by PMCare Sdn Bhd. Photo by Saw Siow Feng.

The Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) is calling for a total nationwide ban on vaping and e-cigarette products. Given the well-documented harmful — and potentially fatal — health effects, the high risk of abuse, their addictive nature, and the significant health care costs associated with treating conditions such as e-cigarette or vaping-associated lung injury (EVALI), the MMA strongly believes that a comprehensive national ban is the only viable course of action to safeguard public health.

We commend the state governments of Johor, Terengganu, Kelantan, and most recently, Perlis for taking decisive action to safeguard public health by banning the sale of vaping products or restricting the issuance of business licenses for their sale.

These actions reflect a growing recognition of the serious health risks posed by vaping and e-cigarette products, particularly to our youth. To ensure consistent protection for all Malaysians, we strongly urge the federal government to implement a nationwide ban on the sale of vaping and e-cigarette products.

Public health must take precedence over profit, and we cannot allow these harmful products to jeopardise the well-being of future generations.

While a federal ban on vape products may require legislative amendments, this should not delay urgent action. State governments can go ahead and implement state-level bans without hesitation to protect the health and future of their communities.

Cases of lung injury linked to vape and e-cigarette use have already been reported in Malaysia, with treatment costs for each patient reaching six figures — a significant burden on taxpayers and the national health care system.

According to the Ministry of Health (MOH), a total of 41 e-cigarette or EVALI cases have been reported from 2019 to 2024, and it has cost the government RM150,000 to treat each case.

In addition to this, the National Poison Centre has recorded 111 cases of incidents related to exposure to e-cigarettes or vape liquids from 2015 to 2023.

These figures will further increase or potentially skyrocket if vaping continues to be permitted.

Alarmingly, e-cigarette users have increased by 600 per cent over the last 12 years, according to the Global Adult Tobacco Survey 2023. According to the study, the prevalence of e-cigarette or vape use among those in the 15-to-24 age group increased from 1.1 per cent in 2011 to 8.6 per cent in 2023.

Due to vape's availability in various attractive flavours, it isn't surprising that vape addiction also begins at a young age. Close to 20,000 cases of students vaping in schools were reported in the country last year. This is despite the age restriction on the sale of vaping and e-cigarette products.

We are also deeply concerned over reports about students as young as 13 years old who have been caught using vapes containing substances mixed with drugs.

The MMA strongly urges the government to take decisive action by implementing a nationwide ban on vaping and e-cigarette products. We must put the health of our people — especially our youth — above all else.

Now is the time to act with courage and responsibility, for the sake of current and future generations.

- *Dr Kalwinder Singh Khaira is president of the Malaysian Medical Association.*