



## MMA urges Putrajaya to drop nicotine appeal, warns youth addiction crisis could worsen

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*The Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) has intensified pressure on the government to refrain from appealing the High Court's decision to nullify a ministerial order that removed liquid and gel nicotine from the poisons list. - Scoop file pic, May 19, 2026.*

Medical association calls for liquid and gel nicotine to be reinstated under the poisons list, saying delays in action risk fuelling addiction among teenagers and placing public health behind economic interests

**KUALA LUMPUR** – The Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) has intensified pressure on the government to refrain from appealing the High Court's decision to nullify a ministerial

order that removed liquid and gel nicotine from the poisons list.

MMA president, Datuk Dr R Thirunavukarasu, also called on Putrajaya to immediately reinstate the substances under the poisons list, warning that the consequences of delaying action would be borne by public health, particularly among youths.

In a statement today, Thirunavukarasu said the MMA had consistently objected to the government's 2023 decision to exempt liquid and gel nicotine from the poisons list, especially as it was done before comprehensive tobacco and vape control legislation had come into force.

He said the High Court ruling reinforced longstanding concerns raised by the medical fraternity over the manner in which major health policies were being decided.

"This case has exposed what the MMA has repeatedly warned about for years that critical public health policies are at risk of being influenced by fiscal and commercial considerations instead of sound medical evidence and expert guidance.

"The poisons list board, which consists of medical and scientific experts, had unanimously advised against the exemption. That professional advice was disregarded, and the court has now clearly ruled that the process and decision were unlawful.

"This should serve as a serious lesson to all policymakers. Malaysia cannot continue making health decisions that prioritise revenue collection or industry interests over the wellbeing of the rakyat," he said.

Thirunavukarasu stressed that the impact of such decisions would be most severe on younger Malaysians, particularly amid growing concerns over vaping among teenagers and schoolchildren.

"Every time a public health decision is made primarily to accommodate economic interests, it is the people, especially our children and adolescents, who ultimately suffer the consequences.

"We are already witnessing increasing nicotine addiction among youths. The government must recognise that the health of future generations cannot be treated as a financial calculation or a budgetary consideration," he added.

Last week, the High Court ruled that the government's move to exempt liquid and gel nicotine from the poisons list was unlawful and irrational, after finding that the Health Ministry had failed to properly consult the poisons list board before making the decision.

Following the ruling, the Health Ministry said it was considering whether to pursue further legal action, including a possible appeal.

Earlier today, the Galen Centre for Health and Social Policy also urged the government not to challenge the court's decision, instead calling for cigarette excise duties to be increased to at least RM0.77 per stick as part of broader tobacco control measures. – **May 19, 2026**