



MMA backs designated smoking area idea

The Malaysian Medical Association's president says the initiative can contribute to a gradual change in attitude that smoking is not normal.

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MMA president Dr Azizan Abdul Aziz said designated smoking areas should be situated outdoors and away from crowded areas to prevent exposure of second hand smoke to non-smokers.

PETALING JAYA: The Malaysian Medical Association backs the establishment of designated smoking areas, but says the initiative must be carefully planned and executed.

If properly executed, the initiative could contribute to a gradual change in attitude that smoking was not normal, its president Dr Azizan Abdul Aziz said in echoing a similar stance taken by the National Cancer Society of Malaysia (NCSM).

Azizan suggested that the health ministry work together with the municipal councils and owners of premises to identify suitable locations for this to make the initiative a success.

“Public health must remain the highest priority in these decisions, not the convenience of shop owners and smokers.



Dr Azizan Abdul Aziz.

“Designated smoking areas should be situated outdoors and away from crowded areas to prevent exposure of secondhand smoke to non-smokers,” she said in a statement.

Azizan recommended that the ministry study the implementation of such initiatives in Singapore and Japan for an insight into best practices.

Yesterday, NCSM said allowing designated smoking areas near eateries in tight spaces would not “normalise” smoking.

It said such sites would help in the wider effort to create more smoke-free areas in public spaces.

Last week, health minister Dzulkefly Ahmad said his ministry would consider providing designated smoking areas outside dining premises, especially for those located in tight spaces.

He said it was difficult for these types of eateries to adhere to the current rule that people could only smoke three metres outside the premises.

The Federation of Malaysian Consumers Associations however panned the idea saying designated smoking areas contradicted the national policy on tobacco control.