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# MMA: Ban smoking in vehicles

Bernama / Bernama

April 05, 2019 21:51 pm +08



**Chinaplas 2019**

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KUALA LUMPUR (April 5): Besides shopping malls, eateries and offices, the Government should consider an awareness campaign to prevent smoking in private vehicles, Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) president Dr Mohamed Namazie Ibrahim said in a statement.

He said people travelling together can be directly exposed to second-hand smoke (SHS) if a person lights up in the car, adding that countries like Australia, Canada and France have introduced smoking bans where a person can be fined for smoking in the presence of a minor or expectant mum.

“This may require the involvement of other Ministries, but we feel this is an important area to be addressed,” he said.

On April 1, Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad said he is committed to enacting a stand-alone Tobacco Control Act that would designate all public places as non-smoking areas, with few spots for smoking.

It was not his Ministry's intention to outlaw smoking, he said, but the action would ensure the public, particularly woman and children, don't fall victim to SHS.

He acknowledged that change won't come easy, but the Ministry is confident its plan will be successful.

Dr Mohamed Namazie said the MMA will continue to support the Malaysian Government's campaign for smoke-free spaces and reducing exposure to SHS.

He said over 1.4 billion people — or 20 percent — of the world's population are enjoying protection under comprehensive smoke-free laws, therefore this is a step in the right direction for Malaysia.

“We are confident also that in the long run, these measures will significantly help reduce the nation's expenditure on healthcare costs,” he said.