

## LETTER | MMA supports setting up of designated smoking areas

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LETTER | The Malaysian Medical Association will support the establishment of designated smoking areas (DSAs), which is being considered by the Health Ministry.

It must however be carefully planned and executed. Considering the implementation of DSAs is by no means a U-turn in policy by the Health Ministry. We believe the ministry remains firm in its stand against smoking.

We agree, if properly executed, DSAs have the potential to contribute to the gradual denormalisation of smoking - a viewpoint the MMA shares with the National Cancer Society of Malaysia.

For effective implementation, the ministry will need to work together with the municipal councils and owners of premises to identify suitable locations for DSAs.

Public health must remain the highest priority in these decisions, not the convenience of shop owners and smokers. DSAs should be situated outdoors and away from crowded areas to prevent exposure of non-smokers to secondhand smoke.

Looking ahead, we recommend that the ministry examine the implementation of DSAs in countries like Singapore and Japan to gather insights and best practices.

The writer is the president of the Malaysian Medical Association.

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