

MMA calls on MPs to back tobacco control bill

By [Hana Naz Harun](#) - May 31, 2023 @ 8:23pm



The Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) has called on all members of parliament (MPs) to vote in support of the Tobacco and Smoking Control Bill, which is expected to be tabled during the current sitting. - NSTP file pic

KUALA LUMPUR: The Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) has called on all members of parliament (MPs) to vote in support of the Tobacco and Smoking Control Bill, which is expected to be tabled during the current sitting.

MMA president Dr Muruga Raj Rajathurai said MPs should prioritise Malaysians' health, adding that this was an opportunity to save future generations from the dangers of smoking and vape addiction.

He said MMA had been speaking to MPs from both sides of the political divide for their support of the bill.

"We are pleased that the Health Ministry has recently reaffirmed its commitment to tabling the bill in June.

"However, we hope all MPs, regardless of their political affiliation, will put the health of Malaysians first and support the bill.

"(They should) tell them to stand up for the health of Malaysians and say 'no' to smoking and vaping with their vote for the bill in Parliament," he said in his speech at the 28th National Anti-Smoking Poster Drawing.

Competition prize-giving ceremony, which is held in conjunction with World No Tobacco Day, in Melaka today.

Dr Muruga Raj urged Malaysians to voice their support for the bill to MPs through social media.

The bill was tabled for the first and second readings at the Third Meeting of the Fifth Term of the 14th Dewan Rakyat session in August last year.

However, the bill was referred to the Special Select Committee for review.

The tabling of the bill was delayed due to the dissolution of Parliament on Oct 10.

The current Dewan Rakyat sitting is scheduled for 11 days, from May 22 to 25 and from June 6 to 15.

Under the bill, children born from 2007 onwards would be prohibited from smoking, buying or possessing any type of smoking product, including electronic cigarette or vape product, even after reaching the age of 18.

Dr Muruga Raj said there was more than enough scientific evidence showing health damage caused by smoking and vaping.

He said cigarette smoking caused cancers, heart disease, stroke, lung disease, diabetes and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, which includes emphysema and chronic bronchitis.

He added that vaping could lead to e-cigarette or vaping product use-Associated Lung Injury, which is a fatal disease.

"To all Malaysian youths, there is nothing cool about smoking or vaping. All it does is destroy your health and cause suffering.

"Treatment costs for diseases associated with smoking and vaping can run into six digits, causing financial hardship. Being sick with no money is not cool," Dr Muruga Raj said.

Meanwhile, MMA Action on Smoking and Health committee chairman Dr Murallitharan Munisamy said the long-awaited Control of Smoking Product for Public Health Bill 2023 would become the "greatest gift" the nation would receive in terms of commitment to the health of Malaysians.

"The bill will regulate and restrict conventional cigarettes and vape, while the 'Generational End-Game' portions of the bill will act as a roadmap for our country to wrestle free out of the chains of nicotine addiction that continues to cause sorrow, death, health and economic suffering for all Malaysians.

"In conjunction with World No Tobacco Day, the public should speak up on social media to their communities and, most importantly, to their parliamentary representatives.

"We need to pass them the clear message that the majority of Malaysians are committed to ensuring that we leave a legacy of a tobacco-free Malaysia for our children and grandchildren,"