

MMA wants PM to 'flip-flop' and re-list nicotine under Poisons Act

By [Fuad Nizam](#) - June 13, 2023 @ 8:12pm



Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) hopes Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim will re-list nicotine under the Poisons Act immediately for the sake of the people's health. - NSTP file pic

KUALA LUMPUR: The Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) has called on Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim to "flip-flop" and re-list nicotine under the Poisons Act.

Its president, Dr Muruga Raj Rajathurai, in a statement, said that he hopes the prime minister will flip-flop on his decision and re-list nicotine under the Act immediately for the sake of the people's health.

"We refer to the statement by the prime minister in Parliament today, that he will 'flip-flop' on decisions if it benefits the people.

"For the sake of the people's health, especially the health of our younger generation, the MMA hopes the prime minister will flip-flop this time and re-list nicotine under the Act immediately."

The association also called on all medical and pharmaceutical associations to come together to put pressure on the government to re-list nicotine under the Act.

"If the Health Ministry was truly committed on passage of the Control of Smoking Products for Public Health Bill and understand the clear and present dangers of nicotine addiction and poisoning, it would have not removed nicotine from the Act before the tabling of the Bill."

The association has also called out on the Health Ministry over their act of removing nicotine from the Act despite knowing the dangers.

"In the Parliament's Special Chambers yesterday, the Health Minister revealed that a 16-year old girl with a three-year vaping history had died from acute heart failure in a probable E-cigarette or Vaping product use-Associated Lung Injury (EVALI) case."

"The minister also revealed that a two year old girl, suspected to have ingested liquid nicotine either via inhalation or swallowing of the vape liquid from a disposable vape, suffered seizures at a paediatric Intensive Care Unit (ICU). The toddler went on to suffer from neurological problems with disturbed motor and speech functions.

"Despite all this data and the fact that the e-cigarette and vape industry remains unregulated, and that the move to exempt nicotine from the list is to allow for it to be taxed. it is disappointing as tax collection takes precedence over public health concerns."

The MMA has also expressed concern over rumours that the bill is intentionally being delayed due to fears that the ruling coalition may lose support, particularly among younger voters in the upcoming state elections.

This has led to public speculation on social media that the tobacco and vape industry may be exerting pressure on the government to meet their demands regarding the bill.

"We believe there is no truth to these claims. However, the government must do more to prove it is prioritising the health of all Malaysians by giving urgency to the tabling of the Bill for passage in Parliament in the current session.

"Any further delays will be seen by the people as a lack of concern from the government over serious issues affecting public health."

On June 12, The Control of Smoking Products for Public Health Bill 2023, dubbed the generational end game (GEG) bill, was tabled for first reading in the Dewan Rakyat.

Health Minister Dr Zaliha Mustafa said the bill would be referred to the parliamentary special select committee (PSSC) before being debated in Parliament.

During a special chambers session later, Dr Zaliha said the ministry's move to once again refer the bill to the PSSC was made following calls by stakeholders, including individuals in the fraternity, to have it studied further.

The bill deals with not only conventional smoking products, but also "next generation" products, including electronic and combustible cigarette products.