

Medical association urges MPs to support Tobacco, Smoking Control Bill

BY MARILYN TEN ON JUNE 1, 2023, THURSDAY AT 8:00 AM [SARAWAK](#)



The Bill proposes that children, born from 2007 and subsequent years are to be prohibited from smoking, buying or possessing any type of smoking product, including electronic cigarettes or vape products, even after reaching the age of 18. – Bernama photo

KUCHING (June 1): Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) president Dr Muruga Raj Rajathurai has called on all members of parliament (MPs) to support the Tobacco and Smoking Control Bill that will be tabled in Parliament this June.

“The Ministry of Health had reaffirmed its commitment and we hope all MPs, regardless of their political affiliation, will put the health of Malaysians first and support the Bill,” he said at the 28th National Anti-Smoking Poster Drawing Competition prize giving ceremony, held in conjunction with World No Tobacco Day in Melaka yesterday.

The Bill proposes that children, born from 2007 and subsequent years are to be prohibited from smoking, buying or possessing any type of smoking product, including electronic cigarettes or vape products, even after reaching the age of 18.

“We now have the opportunity to save the younger generation and generations to come, from the dangers of smoking and vape addiction,” said Dr Muruga.

“Tell them (the MPs) to stand up for the health of Malaysians and say a big ‘No’ to smoking and vaping with their vote for the Bill in Parliament,” he urged, in making a call for all Malaysians to support the Bill through social media platforms.

He also said that MMA has also been speaking to MPs from both sides of the divide for their support on the Bill.

“There is more than enough scientific evidence showing the damage to health caused by smoking and vaping.

“Cigarette smoking causes numerous types of cancers, heart disease, stroke, lung disease, diabetes and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) which include emphysema and chronic bronchitis while vaping can lead to e-cigarette or vaping product use-associated lung injury (EVALI).

“Healthcare expenditure to treat these diseases is also high, and I am sure Malaysians do not want this,” he said.

MMA’s Action on Smoking and Health (ASH) Committee chairman Dr Murallitharan Munisamy meanwhile said the long-awaited Control of Smoking Product for Public Health Bill 2023 is expected to be tabled next week.

“The Bill will regulate and restrict both conventional cigarettes and vape; while the Generational End-Game portions of the Bill will act as a clear roadmap for our country to wrestle free out of the chains of nicotine addiction,” he said.

He stressed that the public should play their part in speaking up in social media, to their communities and most importantly, to their parliamentary representatives.

“We need to pass them the clear message that the majority of Malaysia is committed to ensuring that we leave a legacy of a tobacco-free Malaysia for our children and grandchildren,” he added.

Some 500 people attended the event which was officiated by Deputy Health Minister Lukanisman Awang Sauni.

During the event, a book titled ‘Harms of Harm Reduction in Tobacco Control’ was jointly launched by the Malaysian Council for Tobacco Control (MCTC), the Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) and the National Cancer Society of Malaysia (NCSM).

Dr Murallitharan, who is also MCTC chairman and NCSM managing director, said that a commonly held misperception that is making its way is that e-cigarettes and vaping products are safer than cigarettes, though the available science is proving otherwise.

“To address these concerns, tobacco control advocates including MCTC, MMA and NCSM have come together to compile the most updated relevant evidence in a guide called The Harms of Harm Reduction, which we have also incorporated into a training module that is being used to train healthcare professionals all across the country.

“This will both empower healthcare professionals to be able to understand the facts about harm reduction, misconceptions being put forward and how to advocate and correct misinformation to the public in their professional and private roles,” he said.

The 28th National Anti-Smoking Poster Drawing Competition was organised by ASH in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, NCSM and MCTC.

The competition recently entered the Malaysia Book of Records for the Most Anti-Smoking Poster Drawings in a competition with a total of 24,248 entries.

The poster drawing competition themed 'We Need Food, Not Tobacco – Ke Arah Generasi Tanpa Merokok' was opened for participation from Feb 9 to three categories, namely Primary Schools, Secondary Schools and University/College/Public with RM750, RM1,000 and RM2,000 for each category up for grabs as the first prize.