

NEWS RELEASE

ACATA: REGULATE VAPE PRODUCTS UNDER EXISTING TOBACCO LAWS AS INTERIM SOLUTION

KUALA LUMPUR, 4 April 2023 – The Advanced Centre for Addiction Treatment Advocacy (ACATA) today urged the Ministry of Health (MoH) to take immediate actions to amend the existing Control of Tobacco Product Regulations to regulate vape products after liquid nicotine was exempted as a controlled substance.

Earlier today at the Parliament session, Prime Minister YAB Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim reiterated the Government's commitment to table new bill to regulate the vape industry and added that it is important to take a more moderate approach versus implementing drastic actions such as prohibition.

Dr Arifin Fii, President of Advanced Centre for Addiction Treatment Advocacy said, "As nicotine is also a substance that is found in tobacco, the current tobacco laws should have the powers and can be amended to regulate nicotine vape products. This is crucial as it will subject vape products to stringent controls immediately as an interim solution while waiting for the new bill to be tabled."

In ACATA's view, there are certain controls that are immediately needed.

"The laws need to be in place to stop sale of vape products to individuals under the age of 18. It also needs to ensure ingredients in vape liquids are regulated and ensure free from harmful substance. At the same time, rules have to ensure there is a limit to the amount of nicotine in e-liquid. All these are standard requirements in countries that are regulating vape products. Malaysia should emulate regulations from countries like the UK and New Zealand that has successfully integrated vaping as quit smoking tool in their tobacco control policy."

On GEG, ACATA believes it isn't the right approach especially considering the potential of vape as a less harmful products and effective tool to help smokers quit smoking.

"There are substantial and credible evidence to support that vaping is significantly less harmful than smoking tobacco products. Evidence also show that vaping is effective in helping cigarette smokers to quit. Imposing GEG on vape products is going to be counter-productive as it sends the wrong message to current smokers," said Dr Arifin Fii.

"We cannot take the approach that the previous health minister took as imposing GEG on vape products would mean current smokers would be misinformed and deprived of the opportunity to switch to less harmful product. The principle of harm reduction is universal and more awareness and education on tobacco harm reduction to enable smokers receive the correct, accurate and evidence-based information in order to reduce smoking rates in Malaysia."

"Therefore, regulations for vape products must include provisions that would encourage smokers to switch to vape products and quit smoking. ACATA believes that it is important for all stakeholders to work together to develop an appropriate regulatory framework which provides smokers the accessibility and the confidence to use regulated and less harmful products or they might otherwise continue to smoke," **Dr Arifin** concluded.

