

Hospital Authority welcomes legislation to control alternative smoking products in operation

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The Hospital Authority (HA) welcomed the Smoking (Public Health) (Amendment) Ordinance 2021 in operation today (April 30), which helps safeguard public health by discouraging the consumption of alternative smoking products and minimise the impact of passive smoking on the public.

Dr David Chao, Chairman of the Working Group on Smoking Counselling and Cessation Programme of the Coordinating Committee in Family Medicine of the HA, said, "Both e-cigarette and heat-not-burn products will emit toxic substances. Some of these harmful substances will lead to cell damage and could increase the risk of cancer, besides the harm caused to others by passive smoking."

Dr Chao added that smokers who are infected with COVID-19 will likely be affected more severely than ordinary patients. The HA appeals to smokers to quit smoking immediately to minimise the chances of developing severe smoking-related illnesses. Smoking can lead to various serious conditions such as lung cancer, heart diseases, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and stroke.

The HA operates 70 smoking counselling and cessation centres. The service is delivered by a multidisciplinary team through professional assessment, counselling and follow up services to help smokers quit the smoking habit. Appropriate treatment plans will be formulated upon assessment of the nicotine dependency level of the smokers. The centres also provide information and advice to relatives and friends who wish to help the smokers quit smoking.