



NEWS RELEASE

MVA: PLAIN PACKAGING AND BANNING DISPLAY OF VAPE PRODUCTS IS AGAINST TOBACCO HARM REDUCTION APPROACH

Emulate Sweden's success in leveraging on Tobacco Harm Reduction approach to achieve smoke-free future

KUALA LUMPUR, 2 May 2024 – Malaysian Vapers Alliance (MVA), a local vape consumer advocacy group, said that any proposal to impose plain packaging on vape products and banning the display of vape products is against tobacco harm reduction approach and urged the Government of Malaysia to take a leaf out of Sweden's book to achieve a smoke-free future.

Sweden has emerged as a beacon of success in tobacco control by implementing progressive and evidence-based harm reduction strategies. The country's approach has led to a remarkable 55% decline in smoking rates over the last decade, positioning Sweden on the brink of becoming the world's first smoke-free nation. Central to Sweden's success is its encouragement of smokers to transition to less harmful alternatives.

Khairil Azizi Khairuddin, President of the Malaysian Vapers Alliance said, "Sweden's experience demonstrates the efficacy of harm reduction strategies in reducing smoking prevalence and improving public health outcomes. Malaysia should take inspiration from Sweden and adopt similar measures to accelerate our progress towards a smoke-free future."

"As the Ministry of Health (MoH) develops the Control of Smoking Products for Public Health Act 2024, MVA emphasizes the need to emulate successful models, such as Sweden's, to effectively reduce cigarette smoking rate in Malaysia."

"Plain packaging on vape and banning display of vape products in shops only serve to hinder tobacco harm reduction efforts. These measures should not be imposed on vape products as it only sends the wrong message that vape products are the same as cigarettes and tobacco products.

Apart from potentially driving Malaysian vapers who mainly are ex-smokers back to smoking cigarettes, it is going to pose challenges for consumers to differentiate products in the market especially when all products are packaged in the same color and hidden from sight. Malaysia must prioritise evidence-based policies that support harm reduction and empower smokers to make informed choices."

Based on publicly available data, smoking rates in Malaysia is 3.1 times higher than Sweden. Further, smoking related deaths in Malaysia are 67% higher than in Sweden.

“These figures underscore the importance of tobacco harm reduction strategies by encouraging smokers to switch to less harmful alternatives. This success story proves that with the right policies in place, nations can dramatically improve public health outcomes. MVA calls on policymakers to consider the Swedish example as a blueprint for reducing smoking rates and improving public health. By supporting the availability and accessibility of less harmful nicotine alternatives, Government can take a significant step towards achieving a smoke-free future,” **Khairil** concluded.

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About the Malaysian Vapers Alliance

The Malaysian Vapers Alliance (MVA) is a nonprofit advocacy group that champions the use of vape products to help smokers quit. MVA's work is dedicated to empowering consumers and representing their interests in various legislative, policy making, and rule-making arenas.