



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**HEALTH SCIENCES AUTHORITY
PRESS RELEASE
26 FEBRUARY 2016**

HSA SHUTS DOWN THE ILLEGAL OPERATIONS OF TWO PEDDLERS WHO SOLD VAPORISERS ONLINE

1 The Health Sciences Authority's (HSA) Tobacco Regulation Branch has shut down the illegal operations of two peddlers selling vaporisers¹ and vaporiser accessories after raiding their premises on 23 February 2016. More than 1,000 vaporiser supplies at an estimated street value of \$28,000 were seized.

2 The unlawful activities were detected through HSA's online surveillance and investigations. The first suspect is a male aged 28, who operated his illegal business out of an HDB flat. Preliminary investigations revealed that he had illegally obtained the prohibited vaporisers and vaporiser accessories from Malaysia, peddled them on social media platforms, and delivered the items to his buyers in Singapore.

3 Acting on information provided by the first suspect, HSA enforcement officers conducted a second raid at a mobile phone shop. The seller, a male aged 39, who was operating from the mobile phone shop, had also used social media sites to get customers to visit his shop to purchase vaporisers. He had also obtained his supplies overseas. HSA has since removed all of the suspects' online advertisements. The suspects are currently assisting with investigations. Please refer to **Annex A** for pictures of the raids.

4 The raids are part of HSA's ongoing efforts to deter the illegal peddling of vaporisers in Singapore. From 2011 to date, HSA has prosecuted ten persons for selling such products. The stiffest penalty meted out so far was \$64,500 for the illegal sales of vaporisers.

5 Members of the public are advised not to misuse social media sites to peddle prohibited items like vaporisers. HSA takes such offences seriously and will not hesitate to prosecute offenders.

Vaporisers are strictly prohibited in Singapore

6 Under the Tobacco (Control of Advertisements and Sale) Act, the penalty for importing, distributing or selling any article that is designed to resemble a tobacco product is a fine of up to \$5,000 for the first offence and a fine of up to \$10,000 for a second or subsequent offence for each count of offence. This includes vaporisers such as e-cigarettes, e-pipes, e-cigars and the like. Information pertaining to the prohibition is available on HSA's [website](#).

¹ The term vaporiser includes e-cigarettes, e-pipes, e-cigars and the like.

7 Members of the public who have information on the illegal importation, distribution or sales of vaporisers can call HSA's Tobacco Regulation Branch at Tel: 6684 2036 or 6684 2037 during office hours (9:00am to 5:30pm, Monday to Friday) or email hsa_trb@hsa.gov.sg.

Marketing claims of vaporisers are not proven

8 There is no conclusive scientific evidence on the safety of vaporisers with regard to the users' long-term health or the effectiveness of vaporisers in helping smokers quit tobacco use. Studies suggest that vaporisers containing nicotine may be dangerous, deliver unreliable doses of nicotine, or contain toxic chemicals or carcinogens that are potentially harmful to health.

9 The Ministry of Health, Health Promotion Board and HSA are concerned that vaporisers could potentially be a gateway to developing a smoking habit, particularly among the young. Smoking is known to increase the risks of chronic diseases and other health conditions, and is a major preventable cause of death.

10 The World Health Organization (WHO) has also stated that it does not support such products as a legitimate form of therapy to help smokers quit as the evidence available to date is insufficient to support the claim. The WHO, noting that such products emit chemicals, some of which are considered to be toxicants, have urged member states to institute measures for public health protection, including banning such products. For more information, please refer [here](#).

Consumer Advisory

11 The public should not purchase any vaporisers, including through online sites, and should not attempt to bring these products into Singapore. The public should also refrain from using vaporisers and discard any vaporisers they have in possession. Individuals seeking to quit smoking with the assistance of pharmacotherapy should use a regulated and licensed nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) product or other non-nicotine medications under proper medical supervision. NRTs, when used in conjunction with counselling, have been shown to be effective in helping individuals quit smoking in the long run. Advice and support on smoking cessation are available through the toll-free Quitline at 1800 438 2000 or the iQuit club at www.iquitclub.sg.

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The Health Sciences Authority (HSA) applies medical, pharmaceutical and scientific expertise through its three professional groups, Health Products Regulation, Blood Services and Applied Sciences, to protect and advance national health and safety. HSA is a multidisciplinary authority. It serves as the national regulator for health products, ensuring they are wisely regulated to meet standards of safety, quality and efficacy. As the national blood service, it is responsible for providing a safe and adequate blood supply. It also applies specialised scientific, forensic, investigative and analytical capabilities in serving the administration of justice. For more details, visit <http://www.hsa.gov.sg/>.

For more updates on public health and safety matters, follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/HSAsg.

About HSA's Health Products Regulation Group

The Health Products Regulation Group (HPRG) of HSA ensures that drugs, innovative therapeutics, medical devices and health-related products are wisely regulated and meet appropriate safety, quality and efficacy standards. It contributes to the development of biomedical sciences in Singapore by administering a robust, scientific and responsive regulatory framework.

ANNEX A

HSA SHUTS DOWN THE ILLEGAL OPERATIONS OF TWO PEDDLERS WHO SOLD VAPORISERS ONLINE

Photographs of the seized products from suspect's vehicle & flat



Photographs of the seized products from the mobile phone shop in Geylang





