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**HEALTH SCIENCES AUTHORITY
PRESS RELEASE
4 SEP 2013**

HSA REVOKES LICENCE OF RETAILER CAUGHT SELLING TOBACCO TO 11 YEAR OLD BOY

Public reminded not to buy or supply tobacco products to minors under 18

The Health Sciences Authority (HSA) has revoked the licence of an errant tobacco retailer – Sunshine Trading Centre at 536, Upper Serangoon Road and suspended the licence of another tobacco retailer, Ghee Huat Provision Shop at 45 Bendemeer Road – for selling tobacco products to minors under 18 years of age.

Retailer's licence revoked

2 The case involving Sunshine Trading Centre came to light when HSA's enforcement officers acted on a tip-off by a member of the public and caught the employee of the retail outlet selling cigarettes to a minor who is only 11 years old. The employee failed to check the age of the young buyer before selling the product to him. For committing the offence, the licence of the tobacco retail outlet was revoked and it will no longer be allowed to sell tobacco products from 1 September 2013.

Retailer's licence suspended

3 As for the second case, HSA officers had been observing the vicinity of Ghee Huat Provision Shop and caught the employee selling cigarettes to a 14 year old.

4 The sellers in both cases were convicted in Court and fined for their respective offences (refer to details and photos at **Annex A**).

5 Retailers and their employees play an important role in ensuring that minors under 18 do not get hold of tobacco products. HSA would like to remind retailers that they are responsible for all transactions of such products taking place at their outlets, as well as for the actions of their employees. Under the Tobacco (Control of Advertisements and Sale) Act, anyone caught selling tobacco products to persons below the age of 18 is liable, on conviction in Court, to a maximum fine of up to \$5,000 for the first offence and up to \$10,000 for the second or subsequent offence.

6 In addition, the tobacco retail licence will be suspended for six months for the first offence and revoked for the second offence. However, if any outlet is found selling tobacco products to minors under-18 in school uniform or those below 12 years of age, the tobacco retail licence will be revoked, even at the first offence. The updated List of Suspended / Revoked Tobacco Retailers may be viewed at:

http://www.hsa.gov.sg/publish/hsaportal/en/health_products_regulation/tobacco/Suspended_Licences.html.

Purchasing tobacco products for minors under-18 is an offence

7 As more retailers take greater responsibility not to sell to minors, HSA is concerned too about minors resorting to getting adults or their friends to help purchase tobacco products for them.

8 HSA warns the public not to buy any tobacco product on behalf of minors. Anyone caught buying or acquiring any tobacco product for a person below the age of 18 years is liable on conviction in Court, to a maximum fine of up to \$2,500 for the first offence and up to \$5,000 for the second or subsequent offence. Similarly, anyone caught giving or furnishing tobacco product to a person below the age of 18, is liable on conviction in Court, to a maximum fine of up to \$500 for the first offence and up to \$1,000 for the second or subsequent offence. 13 people have already been apprehended from January to August this year for buying/acquiring offences, as compared to 16 for the entire year of 2012.

9 HSA also reminds the public that persons below the age of 18 who are caught for using, buying or possessing tobacco products are liable on conviction, to a maximum fine of \$300. 3,651 minors under 18 have already been caught from January to August this year for such offences, as compared to 5,759 for the entire year of 2012 (refer to **Annex B** for the details of the number of minors caught).

10 Members of the public who have information on the illegal sales of tobacco products to minors or that of minors smoking to call the Tobacco Regulation Branch at Tel: 66842036 or 66842037 during office hours or to email: HSA_TRB@hsa.gov.sg.

HEALTH SCIENCES AUTHORITY 4 SEPTEMBER 2013

About the Health Sciences Authority (HSA)

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.

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Table 1 – List of Errant Tobacco Retailers Caught Selling Tobacco to Minors Under-18

S/N	Name of Retail Outlet	Address of Retail Outlet	Court actions against seller	Punishment for retailer
1	Sunshine Trading Centre	536 Upper Serangoon Road	Fine of \$2,000	Revocation of licence (From 1 Sep 13 onwards)
2	Ghee Huat Provision Shop	45 Bendemeer Road #01-1445	Fine of \$2,000	6 months suspension (1 Sep 13 to 28 Feb 14)

Photographs of Errant Tobacco Retailers (as listed in Table 1)



Sunshine Trading Centre

Ghee Huat Provision Shop

Table 2 – Under-18 Minors Caught for Smoking Offences*

Year	No. of minors caught	Proportion of males (%)	Proportion of females (%)
2009	6607	76.8	23.2
2010	6947	78.4	21.6
2011	5968	78.7	21.3
2012	5759	81.4	18.6
Jan-Aug 2013	3651	80.9	19.1

* Please note that the numbers of under-18 minors caught are not indicative of the smoking prevalence for this age group.