



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**HEALTH SCIENCES AUTHORITY  
PRESS RELEASE  
12 DECEMBER 2014**

## **HSA CLAMPS DOWN ON ILLEGAL ONLINE ELECTRONIC CIGARETTE PEDDLERS**

The Health Sciences Authority's (HSA) Tobacco Regulation Branch raided two residences at Yishun Street 81 and Seletar Hills Estate in an operation conducted on 11 December 2014, Thursday. The transaction records seized revealed that the sellers had engaged in electronic cigarette (e-cigarette) sales totalling to more than \$90,000.

2 The suspects were identified through HSA's online surveillance and investigation. Preliminary investigations revealed that the two suspects, Singaporean males aged 33 and 38 were business partners. They had purchased the prohibited products from overseas suppliers to sell via an e-commerce website, which has been shut down by HSA. The suspects are currently assisting with investigations. Please refer to **Annex A** for photographs of the seized products.

3 The raid is part of ongoing efforts by HSA to deter the illegal peddling of e-cigarettes in Singapore. From 2011 to date, HSA has prosecuted eight persons for selling such products. The stiffest penalty meted out so far was \$64,500 for the illegal sales of e-cigarettes.

### **E-cigarettes are strictly prohibited in Singapore**

4 HSA would like to remind the public that it is an offence under the Tobacco (Control of Advertisements and Sales) Act to import, distribute or sell e-cigarettes, e-pipes, and e-cigars.

5 The penalty 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. Information pertaining to the prohibition of e-cigarettes in Singapore is available [here](#).

6 HSA encourages members of the public who have information on the illegal importation, distribution or sales of e-cigarettes to call its Tobacco Regulation Branch at Tel: 6684 2036 or 6684 2037 during office hours (9:00am to 5:30pm, Monday to Friday).

### **E-cigarettes claims not proven**

7 E-cigarettes are being marketed as a safer alternative to conventional cigarette smoking and as a way to quit smoking. However, there is no conclusive scientific evidence to demonstrate the effectiveness of e-cigarettes in helping

smokers quit tobacco use. A 2011 study conducted by HSA also found poor correlation between the actual nicotine content and the labelled amount among different e-cigarette products.

8 The Ministry of Health, Health Promotion Board and HSA are concerned that e-cigarettes 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.

9 The World Health Organization (WHO) has also stated that it does not support e-cigarettes as a legitimate form of therapy to help smokers quit as the evidence available to date is insufficient to support the claim. The WHO has called on marketers of e-cigarettes to immediately stop the unproven claims on e-cigarettes. For more information, please refer to this [link](#).

### **Consumer Advisory**

10 The public should not purchase any e-cigarettes, including through the Internet, to be brought into Singapore. The public should also refrain from using e-cigarettes and discard any e-cigarettes 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, could be effective in helping individuals quit smoking in the long run. Advice and support on smoking cessation is available through the toll-free Quitline at 1800 438 2000 or the iQuit club at [www.iquitclub.sg](http://www.iquitclub.sg).

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### **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](https://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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**Photographs of the Seized Products**

