

PRESS RELEASE

HPB LAUDED FOR TOBACCO CONTROL EFFORTS

HPB's Blue Ribbon initiative receives stamp of approval from World Health Organization for garnering support for a smoke-free environment

Singapore, 28 December 2012: Singapore's tobacco control efforts have been recognised by the World Health Organization (WHO) as one of the best practices for mobilising support for a 100% smoke-free environment. The recognition was accorded by the WHO Western Pacific Region Healthy City Recognition 2012.

2. The WHO Regional Office for the Western Pacific created the Blue Ribbon campaign to recognise and acknowledge people and organisations working to implement the WHO Framework Convention provisions on smoke-free environments. The campaign seeks to communicate the importance of social solidarity for smoke-free environments.

3. With HPB's launch of a local blue ribbon initiative in March this year, Singapore was the first country regionally to adopt this initiative on a nationwide scale. Thus far, 13 markets and food centres, seven hotels, three parks and three grassroots communities have been recognised for their commitment to create smoke-free environments. All of whom are recognised under the blue ribbon initiative have done so on a voluntary basis. This is because they believe in the importance of tobacco control and the prevention of harmful second-hand or third-hand smoke. They are also convinced that being smoke-free will have little impact on their business. HPB will continue to work with more businesses and organisations to encourage them to support the smoke-free movement.

4. In addition, HPB's Health Ambassadors, who play an important role in the community to create a healthy living social movement, have been working the ground at various neighbourhoods to promote a smoke-free lifestyle as well as voluntary no-smoking zones at void decks and common corridors. These ambassadors go door to door to distribute blue ribbons and quit kits, to support the blue ribbon smoke-free movement as well as help smokers quit. Health Ambassadors disseminate HPB's health messages to the community, empower the community to be health literate, provide effective peer support to introduce and sustain behaviour change in individuals as well as catalyse the recruitment of more Health Ambassadors in the community.

5. Mr Ang Hak Seng, Chief Executive Officer, HPB, said, "Being recognised by the World Health Organization for our efforts in mobilising support for a 100% smoke-free environment shows we are heading in the right direction. The WHO award by no means stagnates our tobacco control efforts. In fact we have an uphill task ahead of us. While Singapore's national smoking prevalence continues to be one of the lowest in the world at about 14 per cent, the percentage of young adult smokers below 30 years old has increased in recent years, from about 12 per cent in 2004 to 16 per cent in 2010. While our multi-prong tobacco control approach encompasses legislation, this award recognises our efforts to move beyond that, to involve and mobilise the community through our blue ribbon initiative and I Quit campaign. We have now progressed from market and food centres to include hotels, parks and communities in the blue ribbon initiative. Our I Quit campaign will continue to offer 150 touch points that provide a smoker with convenient and accessible programmes wherever he is, at home or at work. As more people, communities and places make the choice to join our blue ribbon movement, we move closer to making a smoke-free lifestyle the acceptable social norm."

6. The World Health Organization (WHO) Western Pacific Region Healthy City Recognition 2012 aims to encourage cities to continue to innovate and demonstrate effective and efficient ways of promoting and protecting the health of urban populations. The WHO and the Alliance for Healthy Cities recognise and award outstanding work in

defined areas such as 'mobilising support for 100% smoke-free environment'. HPB has been recognised for its efforts to protect the public against second hand smoke and garner support to create a 100% smoke-free environment.

*_*_*

- Annex 1 Blue Ribbon Initiative
- Annex 2 I Quit Campaign
- Annex 3 National Tobacco Control Programme

Issued by Health Promotion Board

Annex 1 – Blue Ribbon Initiative

S/N	Markets and Food Centres	Address
1	ABC Brickworks Market & Food Centre	Blk 6 Jalan Bukit Merah
2	Adam Road Food Centre	2 Adam Road
3	Albert Centre Market & Food Centre	Blk 270 Queen Street
4	Blk 79 and 79A Circuit Road Food Centre	Blk 79/79A Circuit Road
5	Blk 89 Circuit Road Food Centre	Blk 89 Circuit Road
6	Ghim Moh Market & Food Centre	Blk 20 Ghim Moh Road
7	Kaki Bukit 511 Market & Food Centre	Blk 511 Bedok North St 3
8	Kovan Hougang Market & Food Centre	Blk 209 Hougang St 21
9	Upper Boon Keng Market & Food Centre	Blk 17 Upper Boon Keng Road
10	Tampines Round Market & Food Centre	Blk 137 Tampines St 11
11	Eunos Crescent Blk 4A Market & Food Centre	4A Eunos Crescent
12	Haig Road Market & Cooked Food Centre Blk 1/3	13 Haig Road
13	Geylang Serai Market & Food Centre	1 Geylang Serai

S/N	Hotels
1	Hotel Grand Pacific
2	Swissotel Merchant Court
3	Ibis Novena
4	Marriott Hotel
5	Capri by Fraser Changi City

6	Rendezvous Grand Hotel
7	Royal Plaza on Scotts

S/N	Parks
1	Bedok Reservoir
2	Admiralty
3	Nee Soon South

S/N	Grassroots Communities
1	Bukit Batok East Nature View
2	Nee Soon South Zone C
3	Hong Kah North Zone 6

Annex 2 – I Quit

HPB's I Quit campaign has adopted a community-based, yet personalised approach that encourages smokers to build a network of support to tap into, to make their first or next attempt at quitting smoking a success.

Through 150 touch points, HPB is providing convenient and accessible programmes that a smoker can tap into wherever he is, in the community or at the workplace.

Smokers may get assistance to quit smoking through the following avenues:

- HPB's QuitLine
 - Smokers can call QuitLine at 1800-438 2000 to get personalised advice on quitting smoking from Quit consultants who are specialised nurses trained in smoking cessation methods and counselling
 - QuitLine also has an SMS service (+65 9463 3771) where smokers can text their questions or concerns on quitting smoking
- I Quit Mobile App
 - The mobile app helps smokers to identify their smoking profile type to tailor the most effective approach to quit smoking.
 - With progress tracker, the smoker will be able to monitor how long they have gone without a cigarette and even how much money they have saved through a simple interactive calculator
 - The mobile app is current available for downloading free of charge at iTunes Appstore
- I Quit Club on Facebook
 - Smokers who wish to obtain tips from ex-smokers and encouragement and support from other smokers who wish to quit and supporters, may join the I Quit Club page on Facebook (www.facebook.com/IQUITCLUB)
- Community touchpoints
 - Smokers can seek complimentary quit smoking advice from community pharmacists (Guardian, Watsons and Unity)
 - They may also check with their nearest community club if it has an I Quit Club which offers talks and programmes on quitting smoking, or smokers may also set up an I Quit Club themselves by expressing their interest to be an I Quit Champion through Facebook or Quitline
 - To ensure that quit counselling is readily available to all, free smoking cessation counselling has been extended to lower-income families via all the five Community Development Councils (CDCs) through their budgeting workshop.
- Workplace Smoking Control Programme
 - HPB is working with industries with typically higher numbers of smoker employees, such as Manufacturing, Transport and Storage, Hospitality and Wholesale and Retail industries on a targeted Workplace Smoking Control Programme (WSCP) for their staff who are smokers

- The Workplace Health Promotion Facilitators will receive training to build their capabilities to assess the smokers' needs and offer a programme to meet their unique working environment, such as shift work that does not afford time off-site. Companies can also tap on the Workplace Health Promotion Grant to run smoking cessation programmes for their employees. Interested companies can find out more about the grant on www.hpb.gov.sg/healthatwork
- The 12-week programme comprises on-site counselling by Quit consultants, recommendation of nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) for smokers who are assessed to be suitable to use NRT products, QuitLine counselling services through phone and SMS, and face-to-face support by Quit buddies or befrienders at the workplaces
- Upon the completion of the 12-week programme, the participants will be referred off-site to cessation service providers such as HPB's Quitline consultants for telephone or SMS follow-up
- The participants are also encouraged to continuously support each other by starting their own I Quit Club at the workplace

Annex 3 – National Tobacco Control Programme

Besides the blue ribbon initiative, HPB as the national driver of the National Tobacco Control Programme has also accomplished the following:

- In partnership with the Health Sciences Authority (HSA), legislation such as banning misleading descriptors on tobacco packaging; implementing a new set of graphic health warnings and extension of graphic health warning labels to the outer packaging (i.e. carton packaging); lowering the maximum tar and nicotine limits as well as replacing the requirement to print tar and nicotine yield levels with a new health information requirement; as well as requiring cigarillos to be sold in packs of 20 instead of the current 10, will be in effect from 1 March 2013.
- In effect since 2011, the I Quit campaign has been encouraging smokers to make a personal pledge to quit. With 150 convenient and accessible touch points which include smoking cessation counsellors based at neighbourhood Community Clubs and pharmacies, and smoking cessation programmes developed in partnership with schools and workplaces. It is supported by an I Quit Club on Facebook and a QuitLine. Since September this year, HPB has also started working with the Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura (MUIS), Malay grassroots organisations such as Malay Activity Executive Committees (MAECs) and mosques, as an extension of its Tobacco Control Ecosystem.
- Industries with typically higher numbers of smoker employees, such as Manufacturing, Transport and Storage, Hospitality and Wholesale and Retail industries will be targeted for specific tobacco control initiatives namely HPB's Workplace Smoking Control Programme (WSCP) for their staff.
- HPB launched a health engagement programme with all ITE colleges which includes forming a Health Alliance with Student Councils, supporting and funding youth health advocacy projects, training and nurturing peer advocates as well as disseminating healthy messages through social media.