



**Center of Excellence for the Acceleration of Harm Reduction (CoEHAR)**  
**Position Statement on the Proposed Vaping Ban in Terengganu, Malaysia**

Date: 24<sup>th</sup> May 2025

**The Honourable YAB Dato' Seri Anwar Ibrahim**  
**Prime Minister**  
**Government of Malaysia**

Dear YAB Dato' Seri Anwar Ibrahim,

The Center of Excellence for the Acceleration of Harm Reduction (CoEHAR), an international leading research institution focused on advancing harm reduction strategies in tobacco control, respectfully submits this position statement regarding the proposed ban on the sale of vaping products scheduled to take effect in Terengganu on August 1, 2025.

Our multidisciplinary team comprises experts in medicine, public health, law, and social sciences who work globally to inform evidence-based policy and promote strategies that reduce the health and social burden of smoking.

While we recognize and commend the Terengganu State Government's commitment to safeguard public health, we urge you to consider both the growing body of scientific evidence supporting tobacco harm reduction (THR) and the potential unintended consequences of prohibition-based approaches.

**1. E-Cigarettes as a Science-Based Harm Reduction Strategy**

Global health authorities increasingly recognize e-cigarettes as significantly less harmful than combustible tobacco. Numerous studies confirm that by avoiding combustion—the main source of harmful toxins in cigarettes—e-cigarettes deliver nicotine with drastically reduced levels of carcinogens, respiratory toxins, and cardiovascular risk factors. These findings are consistent with biomarker studies showing that users of regulated vaping products experience far lower exposure to harmful substances than smokers.

Countries such as the United Kingdom and New Zealand have successfully integrated e-cigarettes into their public health strategies, encouraging adult smokers who are unable or unwilling to quit nicotine entirely to switch to safer alternatives. These policies have



resulted in measurable declines in smoking rates and related disease burden, validating THR as a complementary tool to conventional tobacco control.

## **2. Risks of Prohibition: Black Markets, Health Hazards, and Missed Opportunities**

While the intention behind a vaping ban is to protect health, global evidence suggests that prohibition can lead to outcomes contrary to public health goals:

- **Black Market Proliferation:** When regulated products are banned, demand does not vanish—it shifts to unregulated, illicit markets. These informal channels often sell unsafe, adulterated products that lack quality control and proper labeling. This has occurred in countries where restrictions were implemented without regulation, such as Greece, Italy and the Netherlands.
- **Reversion to Smoking:** For many former smokers, e-cigarettes serve as an effective cessation aid. A blanket ban eliminates this lower-risk option and may push individuals back to smoking, thus increasing—not reducing—health risks.
- **Loss of Government Oversight:** By removing legal access, authorities forfeit the ability to enforce age limits, safety standards, and public education measures. This undermines consumer protection and weakens regulatory control.
- **Economic Disruption:** Malaysia's vaping sector contributes to job creation, entrepreneurship, and tax revenues. A ban threatens these economic gains and may lead to unintended financial consequences for local businesses and the state budget.

## **3. International Lessons and the Need for Balanced Regulation**

Evidence from around the world highlights the importance of proportionate, science-driven policies. In jurisdictions where e-cigarettes have been banned or heavily restricted (i.e., India, Mexico, the Netherlands), the results often include persistent smoking, growth of illegal markets, and increased public health risks due to unregulated products.

Conversely, countries that have adopted a balanced regulatory framework (i.e., the United Kingdom, New Zealand, Canada) with strict product standards, marketing restrictions, and youth access controls, have achieved better public health outcomes without sacrificing consumer safety or market integrity.



**CENTRO DI RICERCA PER LA RIDUZIONE DEL DANNO DA FUMO**  
**CENTER OF EXCELLENCE FOR THE ACCELERATION OF HARM REDUCTION**  
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### **Conclusion: Protecting Public Health through Effective Regulation**

We urge the Terengganu State Government to reconsider its proposed ban and instead adopt a comprehensive regulatory approach that safeguards public health, protects youth, and empowers adult smokers to transition to less harmful alternatives.

Such an approach should include:

- Enforced age verification and retail licensing
- Strict product safety and quality standards
- Comprehensive public education campaigns
- Ongoing monitoring and scientific evaluation
- Encouraging adult smokers to transition through safer alternatives

Effective regulation—not prohibition—is the sustainable path to protect lives and reduce tobacco-related harm.

Respectfully,

*Prof. Giovanni Li Volti*  
*Director of CoEHAR*

*Prof. Riccardo Polosa*  
*Founder of CoEHAR*