



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**HEALTH SCIENCES AUTHORITY  
PRESS RELEASE  
21 APR 2014**

## **HSA PROSECUTES THREE PERSONS FOR SELLING ELECTRONIC CIGARETTES**

The Health Sciences Authority (HSA) has taken enforcement action against the illegal sale of electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes) in Singapore and seized 490 sets of e-cigarettes worth an estimated \$25,000 from three peddlers.

2 The peddlers, two men and one woman, were prosecuted in February, March and April this year for the online sale of e-cigarettes, which is prohibited in Singapore. For committing these offences, the three peddlers were convicted in Court and fined a total of \$95,500 (refer to **Annex A** for a summary of details).

3 All three peddlers purchased the products separately from overseas suppliers and offered them for sale locally, via websites.

4 The three cases were detected through HSA's online surveillance and enforcement activities, which are targeted at deterring the illegal trade of e-cigarettes in Singapore. All three websites that were managed by the peddlers to sell the e-cigarettes have been shut down. Boo Yee Fong, 32, who was handed the stiffest penalty to date for selling e-cigarettes, was fined \$64,500 on 17 April.

5 In the other two cases, Chew Yew Yee, 36, and Lew Ying Ying, 29, were fined sums of \$10,000 and \$21,000 respectively. The three offenders had obtained the illegal products from overseas suppliers located in China, Italy and the United States.

6 From 2011 to date, HSA has prosecuted eight persons for selling e-cigarettes.

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

7 HSA would like to remind the public that section 16 of the Tobacco (Control of Advertisement and Sales) Act prohibits the import, distribution, sale or offer for sale of any article that is designed to resemble a tobacco product; this includes vapourisers such as e-cigarettes, e-pipes, e-cigars and the likes.

8 Any person who is convicted of an offence under section 16 is liable to a fine not exceeding \$5,000 for a first offence and a fine not exceeding \$10,000 for a second or subsequent offence and any e-cigarettes imported will be seized and confiscated. Information pertaining to the prohibition of e-cigarettes in Singapore is available on HSA's website at:

[http://www.hsa.gov.sg/publish/hsaportal/en/health\\_products\\_regulation/tobacco/legislation/highlights\\_prohibition.html](http://www.hsa.gov.sg/publish/hsaportal/en/health_products_regulation/tobacco/legislation/highlights_prohibition.html).

9 HSA encourages members of the public who have information on the illegal sales of e-cigarettes to call its Tobacco Regulation Branch at Tel: 66842036 or 66842037 during office hours (Monday to Friday).

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

10 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.

11 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.

12 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, refer to:

[http://www.who.int/tobacco/communications/statements/electronic\\_cigarettes/en/index.html](http://www.who.int/tobacco/communications/statements/electronic_cigarettes/en/index.html).

13 The public are reminded to 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://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.

## HSA PROSECUTES THREE PERSONS FOR SELLING ELECTRONIC CIGARETTES

**Table 1 – Case Details of Electronic Cigarette Peddlers Prosecuted**

| <b>S/N</b> | <b>Name of Peddler</b> | <b>Date of conviction</b> | <b>Court actions against peddler</b> |
|------------|------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1          | Boo Yee Fong           | 17 April 2014             | Fine of \$64,500                     |
| 2          | Lew Ying Ying          | 10 March 2014             | Fine of \$21,000                     |
| 3          | Chew Yew Yee           | 13 February 2014          | Fine of \$10,000                     |

## Photographs of the Operation to Nab the Three Peddlers

