

Tobacco Control Strategies in Taiwan with New Regulations and Measures

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Since the implementation of the amended Tobacco Hazards Prevention Act in 2009, in line with international standards and the implementation of the "Framework Convention on Tobacco Control" and the "MPOWER" strategy, the smoking rates among adults, junior high school students, and senior high school and vocational students have been decreasing year by year. The rates have decreased from 21.9% in 2008 to 14.0% in 2022 for adults, from 7.8% in 2008 to 2.2% in 2021 for junior high school students, and from 14.8% in 2007 to 7.2% in 2021 for senior high school and vocational students. Furthermore, the exposure rate to secondhand smoke in public non-smoking areas has decreased from 23.7% in 2008 to 4.0% in 2022.

However, the usage rates of E-cigarettes among junior high school and senior high school and vocational students have notably increased from 1.9% and 3.4% in 2018 to 3.9% and 8.8% in 2021, respectively. Within a short span of three years, they have experienced rapid doubling, indicating the growing threat of E-cigarettes to the health of adolescents. In order to strengthen the protection of children and youth at various stages of development, the Ministry submitted a proposed

amendment to the Tobacco Hazards Prevention Act to the Executive Yuan on October 20, 2020. The key points of the amendment include the addition of a definition for "imitation tobacco product" and a Comprehensive ban on the manufacturing, importation, sale, supply, display, advertising, and the use of E-cigarettes and similar imitation tobacco products. It also establishes a mechanism for strict regulation through health risk assessment review of new types of tobacco products that meet the definition of tobacco (such as heated tobacco products), raising the legal age for tobacco use to 20 years, prohibiting flavored tobacco products, expanding indoor and outdoor tobacco-free public places, increasing the size of health warning labels on tobacco product containers, and imposing heavier penalties, among other strategies. The proposed amendment to the Tobacco Hazards Prevention Act was reviewed and approved by the Executive Yuan on January 13, 2022. It was Passed the third reading in Legislative Yuan (parliament) on January 12, 2023. Promulgated on February 15, 2023. Effective from March 22, 2023.