

Draft Press Release

## **E-CIGARETTE TO BE REGARDED AS A CIGARETTE**

The Ministry of Health in Barbados has taken the decision that the e—cigarette should be regarded as a cigarette and as a result will be taxed at the same level as regular cigarettes.

In addition, the provision of the legislation banning smoking in public places, as well as the ban on sales to and by minors would apply.

This information has come in a statement from the Ministry, which has also indicated that the e-cigarette should not be promoted as a cessation device for tobacco smokers.

The decision to regard the e-cigarette as a normal cigarette is in response to claims by some promoters that the device was a safe alternative to cigarette smoking for both users and third parties, as well as a way to assist persons to quit smoking. The World Health Organization (WHO) has determined that these claims are not supported by evidence and has requested that these therapeutic claims be withdrawn by manufacturers and retailers until they can be validated by appropriate studies.

The Ministry of Health has also raised a number of concerns regarding the use of e-cigarettes. According to that department, research indicated that no set definition of the e-cigarette existed, as different manufacturers used a number of designs for the device, and varied the formulation of ingredients. “Thus, results of analysis of one branded product may not be applicable to all.”

“Analysis of cartridges of two brands of e-cigarettes by the United States Food and Drug Administration disclosed that the amounts of nicotine released by vaporisation fluctuated greatly not only across brands as would be expected, but also from cartridge to cartridge within brands, {and} from puff to puff on the same device. The amount of nicotine released was even different from what was advertised on the label. Some cartridges labelled “nicotine free” also contained nicotine solutions {and} some devices also leaked solution while being used,” the statement explained.

Other concerns associated with e-cigarettes cited by the Ministry include: flavourings added to e-cigarettes can make them attractive to children and their nicotine content may cause children to become addicts; inconsistent labelling and variable nicotine content and delivery may lead to variable systemic absorption and inadvertent nicotine poisoning at higher cartridge concentrations; and cartridge

refill solutions at high concentrations may lead to nicotine poisoning if the solution is spilled and absorbed through the skin or ingested.

An e-cigarette is one of the varied assortments of battery powered inhalers described by the WHO as “electronic delivery systems.” The sale or marketing of e-cigarettes has been banned in Australia, Brazil, Hong Kong, Singapore, Thailand, Norway and Uruguay. (**Ministry of Health/KRM/BGIS**)