

Health group urges gov't agencies to regulate e-cigarettes

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Anti-tobacco group Health Justice Philippines (HJP) has pushed for the regulation of electronic cigarettes, saying these products will put to waste efforts to reduce consumption of traditional cigarettes.

In a statement issued recently, HJP said the Department of Health, Food and Drug Administration and Department of Trade and Industry should have control over the sale of e-cigarettes in the country.

“Business is booming for manufacturers and sellers of e-cigarettes who have been casually throwing around word that their products are safe alternatives to tobacco,” noted Bernadette Esguerra-Huggins of HJP.

Because of this “baseless claim,” she lamented that many people are buying e-cigarettes which also “contain nicotine and more chemicals than the manufacturers and sellers are willing to disclose.”

Huggins said there are over 8,000 varieties of tobacco juices and flavors, and “it is imperative that people be warned about and protected from the potential health risks posed by these products.”

HJP managing director Jacky Sarita said the DOH and FDA should have full regulatory powers over e-cigarettes, pursuant to Article 109 of the Consumer Act of the Philippines or Republic Act 7394 on advertisement and sales promotion with respect to food, drugs, cosmetics, devices and hazardous substances.

“Further, declared as state policy in the Consumer Code is the duty to protect the interests of the consumer, promote his general welfare and to establish standards of conduct for business and industry,” Sarita said.

In a statement, the two maintained that “the right to health is paramount over the right to trade so the implementation of such a regulation should belong to the DOH and FDA.”