

24 August 2022

Tangi Utikere
Chair, Health Committee
Parliament Buildings
Wellington

By email to: Health@parliament.govt.nz

Tēnā koe,

Re: Smokefree Environments and Regulated Products (Smoked Tobacco) Amendment Bill

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the above Bill. The Council of Medical Colleges is the collective voice for seventeen medical colleges in Aotearoa New Zealand, and through its members aims to improve, protect and promote public health via a well-trained medical workforce providing high-quality medical care. Our member colleges provide support to over 9000 specialist medical practitioners working in a range of disciplines in the Aotearoa New Zealand health system.

Medical practitioners witness first-hand the preventable death and disease across the life course caused by smoked tobacco products; and the inequitable health outcomes that smoked tobacco products contribute to for Māori and Pasifika communities. All colleges have an interest in public health issues that impact the wellbeing of patients, whānau and communities throughout Aotearoa New Zealand – making this Bill of significant interest.

Overall, the CMC strongly supports the Bill and considers this legislation will see Aotearoa New Zealand become world-leading in tobacco control. In particular, the CMC strongly supports measures in the Bill to:

- Reduce retail availability of smoked tobacco by limiting the number of retailers that can sell smoked tobacco products. There is evidence that this measure will support smoking cessation (1).
- Introduce a smokefree generation by mandating that smoked tobacco products must not be sold or supplied to any person born on or after 1 January 2009, thereby reducing access to smoked tobacco products.
- Set limits for the quantity of nicotine in smoked tobacco products, to reduce their appeal and addictiveness. There is evidence nicotine reduction will support with smoking cessation and reduce addiction (2).

The CMC also supports the requirements in the Bill for the Director-General of Health to consult with the Māori Health Authority and iwi-Māori partnership boards when determining the application process for approval of smoked tobacco retailers, and the maximum number of smoked-tobacco retailers in an area.

Although strongly in support of the Bill, CMC members have concerns about the marketing of vaping products to rangatahi, and the high rate of uptake among this group. Although vaping can support smoking cessation, it is not harm free. Stronger regulations may be needed to discourage uptake of vaping amongst non-smokers and subsequent nicotine addiction. The impact of the legislation on vaping uptake should be evaluated in time, and research on the health impacts of vaping closely monitored as it evolves.

Nāku noa, nā



Dr Samantha Murton
Chair

References

- 1) [Reducing tobacco retail availability: how could this be achieved and what evidence supports the NZ Government's proposals? – Public Health Expert, University of Otago, New Zealand](#)
- 2) [Removing the nicotine from tobacco: The key component of the current Smokefree Bill – Public Health Expert, University of Otago, New Zealand](#)