



MEDIA STATEMENT BY ASTHMA MALAYSIA and MYDIN Group of Companies

Gazetting restaurants as no-smoking zones

Kuala Lumpur, 9 October 2018 – The announcement by Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad, the Minister of Health, on 6 October 2018 that his Ministry will be gazetting all open eateries as no-smoking areas is a long-awaited move that will have a positive impact on the lives of the rakyat, especially those with underlying medical problems, says Asthma Malaysia's co-founder Dr Helmy.

Dr Helmy said, "The consequences of secondhand smoking are well-documented. As a recent letter signed by 30 Malaysian medical organisations stated, studies have shown that it causes premature heart disease and lung cancer amongst non-smokers and even leads to strokes."

"The effects are particularly felt by women and children. We recently met Datuk Seri Dr Wan Azizah binti Dr Wan Ismail, the Minister of Women and Family Development, who shared our concerns regarding the debilitating effect on these groups of individuals who are often at the mercy of smokers and are unable to voice out their concerns."

For example, secondhand smoke leads to more frequent and severe asthma attacks, respiratory infections and ear infections. It also increases the risk of premature birth, low birth weight, birth defects and sudden infant death syndrome."

"Asthma Malaysia welcomes the government's initiatives in protecting its citizens from the harmful effects of secondhand smoke, in line with its commitments to the World Health Organisation's Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. Multiple studies have proven that appropriate government interventions lead to a drop in hospitalisation rates and prevent deaths," added Dr Sundari Ampikaipakan, a fellow co-founder of Asthma Malaysia.

Dr Sundari said, "Although some eateries have raised the issue of potential income loss with this gazettelement, evidence from abroad have demonstrated that efforts to make eateries more family-friendly have led to an increase in the number of customers".



Y.Bhg. Datuk Wira (Dr) Hj Ameer Ali bin Mydin, the Managing Director of the MYDIN Group of Companies opined “This initiative has plenty of support but we need to work hard to ensure that consumers understand the rationale for it. For a retail chain such as MYDIN which caters massively to families that include children, pregnant mothers and elderly people as well as stakeholders such as wholesalers, restaurants and shop operators, this is a welcomed move that will allow public places to be healthier, safer, cleaner and more environmentally friendly.”

“We are very encouraged by the government’s commitment in protecting the rakyat and look forward to the various Ministries working together and co-ordinating themselves in efforts to reduce the impact of secondhand smoking and providing cleaner air and health for the rakyat,” Dr Helmy concluded.

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