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The Coalition of Asia Pacific Tobacco Harm Reduction Advocates (CAPHRA)

Evidence before bans, says CAPHRA, as Viet Nam outlaws nicotine pouches

Health ministries in Viet Nam and Indonesia should publish their assessment, their quit support for adult smokers and a review date, says CAPHRA.

Viet Nam has written a ban on nicotine pouches into law. The Coalition of Asia Pacific Tobacco Harm Reduction Advocates (CAPHRA) is asking regulators in Southeast Asia to publish the evidence behind prohibition before implementing rules are finalised.

Nicotine pouches are small pads placed under the lip that release nicotine without smoke. Under the new law, making, selling, importing, exporting or using them is banned, and the law starts on 1 July 2027, with some provisions later. In August CAPHRA asked Viet Nam for a licensed adult-only pouch category with a phased evidence review.

Indonesia is weighing a similar step. At a 17 November Constitutional Court hearing the government said its approach could move from control to stricter restriction or comprehensive prohibition. Justice Saldi Isra asked how it would control conventional cigarettes if vapes were banned.

CAPHRA asks each ministry to publish:

1. The health impact assessment behind the ban.
2. How many adult smokers and pouch users it affects, and the quit support funded for them.
3. Its plan for enforcing against illicit supply.
4. A date to review the results.

“Governments can ban products. They should also be able to show their working,” said Nancy Loucas, CAPHRA’s Executive Coordinator.

“Viet Nam has about 15 million smokers. Tell them what the evidence says, what support they will get and when the policy will be checked,” said Loucas.

“The Philippines House health committee has just advanced a smoke-free and vape-free bill, so these questions are close to home,” said Clarisse Virgino, CAPHRA’s Philippines representative. “Adults who have already left cigarettes are the people these rules land on. They should be able to read why.”

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