



Lung Health Alliance slams cigarette company ownership of company dedicated to improving respiratory health

The Thoracic Society of Australia and New Zealand and its Lung Health Alliance partners have expressed strong concern and opposition to the ownership of inhaled medication company Vectura Group by tobacco and e cigarette corporation Phillip Morris International.

As a leading cause of lung disease and lung cancer, smoking directly contributes to the pain, suffering and death of millions worldwide, including nearly 20,000 Australians and 5000 New Zealanders.

As advocates of a smoke free future and the effective regulation of e-cigarettes the Lung Health Alliance will refuse to engage with individuals or organisations who enter new arrangements with the Vectura group after 1 October 2021.

In the interest of patient wellbeing, the Alliance does not encourage patients or health care professionals to alter current treatment plans that involve medications or devices associated or licensed with or by the Vectura Group.

It acknowledges the ethical dilemma presented to patients and their care givers that need access to lifesaving drugs, to health care professionals that prescribe these treatments, governments that subsidise the cost of medications and the organisations that develop these medications. None, including the Lung Health Alliance, wish to see profits from the sale of life changing respiratory medications being directed to Phillip Morris International.

In accordance with the United Nations International Framework Convention on Tobacco Control the Thoracic Society and the Lung Health Alliance strongly encourages pharmaceutical companies, governments, and others to discontinue their agreements and contracts with the Vectura Group at the earliest possible opportunity and not to enter into any new contracts once such have expired.

The Lung Health Alliance, whilst acknowledging that some companies and their new respiratory products may already be a long way down the development path, has drawn a clear line in the sand that after 1 January 2023, any products with connections to Vectura will be viewed as having direct links to the tobacco industry.

The Thoracic Society and the Lung Health Alliance calls on all companies to publicly communicate their current arrangements with the Vectura group and to actively develop, implement and communicate their strategies to exit these agreements.

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The Lung Health Alliance is a collective of national respiratory not-for-profit organisations working together to improve the lung health of individuals and communities in Australia and to contribute to the global effort for lung health.