



JOINT STATEMENT | 10 OCTOBER 2023

### **Malaysia Needs a *Madani* Health Budget**

The Malaysian Health Coalition welcomes the Prime Minister's [assurance](#) on 1 Oct 2023 that the education and health ministries will receive the largest allocations in Budget 2024. We believe that a substantial allocation is necessary to improve the health of Malaysians and the health of our health system. We also call for gradual and planned increases of funding to reach 5% of GDP in Budget 2027.

We further recommend the following:

**1. Allocate funds according to the priorities of the Health White Paper**

We welcome the passing of the Health White Paper (HWP) in both Houses of Parliament in June 2023. The HWP represents Malaysia's latest effort and best chance for successful health reforms in recent years, given the HWP is supported by two Health Ministers, two Prime Ministers and two Directors-General of Health (an unprecedented milestone since reform attempts began in the 1980s). We look forward to the implementation of the HWP, which will be measured in decades rather than in years. A critical success factor for success is the formation of necessary technical working groups and a Health Reform Commission, as envisioned in the HWP.

**2. Begin diversifying funding sources to ensure sustainability**

The [HWP](#) states that in 2020, Malaysia funds healthcare through three main sources: tax-funding from the government (55% of all healthcare spending), out-of-pocket payments (or OOP) (36%) and private insurance (9%). The World Health Organization believes that if OOP is [below 20%](#), few households will face catastrophic health expenditure. Therefore, we believe that the government must begin diversifying funding sources to reduce OOP spending and reduce the reliance on government spending. New funding sources may include gradually introducing social health insurance, earmarking sin taxes, rationalizing user fees or appropriate mobilization of charities and *zakat*.

**3. Invest in primary and preventive healthcare, and the social determinants of health**

A strong primary healthcare system focusing on preventive healthcare will reduce visits to hospital, increase health literacy, and eventually reduce the demand for hospital care. Our first steps can include stronger public-private partnerships with private general practitioners, use digital health where needed, increase the training positions for family medicine specialists and allied healthcare providers, and a strong focus on the social determinants of health, like poverty eradication, labor laws and healthy living conditions. We also call for more facilities and services for the disabled community in Malaysia, as well as an appropriate focus on dental services and mental and psychological healthcare services that are comprehensive, holistic, equitable and empowers the allied healthcare professions.

We appreciate the challenges of raising spending on health and social services at a time when Malaysia has a RM1 trillion debt. However, health should be considered an investment, and not a cost. Healthier Malaysians contribute to the economy, and health investments today will reduce healthcare costs in the future. We look forward to a responsible, far-sighted, ambitious and *Madani* Budget 2024.

### **BERKHIDMAT UNTUK NEGARA**

Malaysian Health Coalition

Signatories (alphabetical):

ASSOCIATIONS:

1. Academy of Medicine Malaysia (AMM)
2. Association of Malaysian Optometrists (AMO)
3. College of Anaesthesiologists, Academy of Medicine Malaysia
4. College of Physicians, Academy of Medicine Malaysia
5. IKRAM Health
6. Islamic Medical Association of Malaysia (IMAM)
7. Lung Cancer Network of Malaysia (LCNM)
8. Malaysian Association for Bronchology and Interventional Pulmonology (MABIP)
9. Malaysian Association of Clinical Biochemists (MACB)
10. Malaysian Association of Dental Public Health Specialists (MADPHS)
11. Malaysian Association of Environmental Health (MAEH)
12. Malaysian Association of Medical Assistants (PPPM)
13. Malaysian Coalition on Ageing (MCOA)
14. Malaysian Dental Association (MDA)
15. Malaysian Dermatology Association (PDM)
16. Malaysian Paediatric Association (MPA)
17. Malaysian Pharmacists Society (MPS)
18. Malaysian Society of Anesthesiologists (MSA)
19. Malaysian Society of Clinical Psychologists (MSCP)
20. Malaysian Society of Geriatric Medicine (MSGM)
21. Malaysian Society of Intensive Care (MSIC)
22. Malaysian Society of Ophthalmologists (MSO)
23. Malaysian Thoracic Society (MTS)
24. Medical Mythbusters Malaysia (M3)
25. MedTweetMY
26. Obstetrics & Gynaecology Society of Malaysia (OGSM)
27. Public Health Physicians Association of Malaysia (PPPKAM)

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