



PRESS STATEMENT FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE • 30 DEC 2020

Four Pandemic Lessons for 2021

In 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic shook Malaysia's health, society and economy. As the pandemic will continue for the foreseeable future, we offer these four lessons for 2021.

1. United, we stand

The Malaysian Health Coalition (MHC) was established in March 2020, just before the Movement Control Order was introduced. Since then, over 50 organisations and individuals have come together intending to support the Ministry of Health (MOH) to protect the health of all Malaysians. Amidst profound uncertainty, MHC attempted to provide a united voice of health professionals, reassure the Rakyat and support the MOH during the pandemic. Through our efforts, we have witnessed first-hand the importance of working together during a crisis. So, we urge all Malaysians and residents of Malaysia, from all levels of society, to remember that beating this pandemic requires a collective effort.

2. We have a world-class health system, but we must continue to strengthen it

Malaysia's front-line health professionals rose to the occasion and are our nation's true heroes. From the intensivists in the ICU to the environmental health officers conducting contact tracing in the field to the mental health practitioners supporting other physicians and the Rakyat alike, all health professionals delivered reliable and high-quality service, despite political instability. Although the best of our health system was proven, the pandemic also shone a spotlight on areas for improvement. For example, we need better treatment for our younger doctors, nurses, pharmacists and dentists. We must over-invest in rural areas like Sabah. We must develop durable solutions for non-citizens in Malaysia. This pandemic should inspire us to remedy these shortcomings for the long haul, starting now.

3. A consistent and transparent government will build confidence

Malaysia beat the first two waves through a combination of stringent policies and high citizen compliance. That was aided by public policies anchored by the MOH and transparently communicated. As the pandemic progressed, public policies became more inconsistent with different ministries and agencies pulling in separate directions. Epidemiology data, public health statistics and healthcare utilisation rates are transparent in other countries, but became politicised in Malaysia. We must return to a consistent government, including federal-state and inter-agency coordination. That government must be confident in data-sharing, as citizens have a right to know the rationale behind public policies.

4. Vaccines will help, but the pandemic is a marathon, not a sprint

Although the vaccine will help our efforts, the pandemic is not over yet. We understand that many Malaysians are fatigued and have faced significant hardship this year. Like you, we HCPs are exhausted. But also like you, we are resilient and will continue serving. As the vaccines are delivered throughout 2021, we urge you to continue following SOPs and to act responsibly. We are all responsible for vaccine confidence and to fight fake news, rumours and harmful information about the vaccines and about our pandemic effort.

MHC has always advocated for an all-of-society approach to fighting this pandemic. As we enter 2021, we appeal to the government to include all sections of society (experts, the private sector, NGOs, academia, think-tanks and citizens) in your strategy-setting and delivery. Eradicating Covid-19 is a collective effort; our health depends on every single person playing their part.

We wish everyone a safe, healthy and happy new year in 2021.

BERKHIDMAT UNTUK NEGARA.

Malaysian Health Coalition

Full Signature List on myhealthcoalition.org.

30 December 2020

Statements from 2020

1. Protect the Rakyat's Health during Political Transitions ([28 February 2020](#))
2. Malaysia Must Unite – COVID-19 will not respect ethnic, religious or political boundaries ([6 March 2020](#))
3. A Strong, Calm and Sensible Response to the Coronavirus Outbreak ([25 March 2020](#))
4. Holistic Measures Against COVID-19 ([28 March 2020](#))
5. Public-Private Partnerships to Fight COVID-19 ([5 April 2020](#))
6. Ensuring Adequate Numbers of Health Professionals ([8 April 2020](#))
7. All Ministries Must Decide Based on Health Expertise ([15 April 2020](#))
8. Strategies for the Post-MCO Period ([23 April 2020](#))
9. Non-Citizen Health is Public Health ([29 April 2020](#))
10. Lead Malaysia with Consistent Public Health Policies ([9 May 2020](#))
11. Public Health Policies Must be Inclusive and Durable ([1 June 2020](#))
12. Stay Vigilant during Recovery MCO ([10 June 2020](#))
13. Patient Safety is Our Priority ([3 July 2020](#))
14. Compliance to Health is Everyone's Business ([30 July 2020](#))
15. Focus on Consistent Enforcement of MCO ([25 August 2020](#))
16. World Suicide Prevention Day: Decriminalise Suicide and Destigmatise Mental Health ([10 September 2020](#))
17. Protect and Recognise Malaysia's Health Professionals ([14 September 2020](#))
18. Next Steps for Vaccine Access ([22 September 2020](#))
19. Mobilise for Sabah, Now ([15 October 2020](#))
20. Transparent Health Data is Key for Success ([23 October 2020](#))
21. Covid-19 is a Health Issue, not a Security Issue ([24 October 2020](#))
22. Prohibit Dubious Health Practices & Pseudoscience ([28 October 2020](#))
23. Budget 2021: Time to Over-Invest in Health ([2 November 2020](#))
24. The Health Budget 2021 is Not Enough ([9 November 2020](#))

Full list of member organisations and individuals

Organisations

1. Academy of Medicine of Malaysia
2. Academy of Family Physicians Malaysia
3. Association of Private Hospitals Malaysia
4. Asthma Malaysia
5. Befrienders Kuala Lumpur
6. CERAH Haze Action Group Malaysia
7. IKRAM Health
8. College of Anaesthesiologists
9. College of Emergency Physicians
10. College of Ophthalmologists
11. College of Physicians
12. College of Public Health Medicine
13. College of Surgeons
14. Dermatology Society of Malaysia
15. Dr Wu Lien-Teh Society
16. Family Medicine Specialists Association
17. Federation of Reproductive Health Associations
18. Islamic Medical Association Malaysia (IMAM)
19. Lung Cancer Network of Malaysia
20. Malaysian Association of Dental Public Health Specialists
21. Malaysian Association of Environmental Health
22. Malaysian Association of Medical Assistants
23. Malaysian Association of Speech-Language & Hearing
24. Malaysian Dental Association
25. Malaysian Health Diplomacy Foundation
26. Malaysian Mental Health Association
27. Malaysian Nurses Association
28. Malaysian Oncological Society
29. Malaysian Paediatric Association
30. Malaysian Pharmaceutical Society
31. Malaysian Society of Anaesthesiologists
32. Malaysian Society of Geriatric Medicine
33. Malaysian Society of Clinical Psychology
34. Malaysian Society of Intensive Care
35. Malaysian Society of Nephrology
36. Malaysian Thoracic Society
37. Medical Mythbusters Malaysia
38. Medical Practitioners Coalition Assoc of Malaysia
39. MedTweetMY
40. MMA Public Health Society
41. MyWATCH Action for Tobacco
42. National Cancer Society Malaysia
43. #OpsHarapan
44. Perinatal Society of Malaysia
45. Pertubuhan Doktor-doktor Islam Malaysia (PERDIM)
46. Public Health Malaysia
47. Public Health Physicians Association

48. Rare Diseases Alliance Foundation of Malaysia

Individuals

1. Tan Sri Dr Abu Bakar Suleiman
2. Tan Sri Dr Mani Jegathesan
3. Dato' Dr Ahmad Faizal Perdaus
4. Dato' (Dr) Anwar Fazal
5. Dato' Dr Amar Singh-HSS
6. Datuk Dr Christopher Lee
7. Prof Dato' Dr Hanafiah Harunarashid
8. Prof Datuk Dr Lokman Hakim
9. Prof Dato' Dr Mohd Zin Bidin
10. Prof Datuk Dr Zulkifli Ismail
11. Prof Dr Ahmad Hata Rasit
12. Prof Dr Raja Affendi Raja Ali
13. Prof Dr Mohd Zamrin Dimon
14. Prof Dr Roslina Abdul Manap
15. Prof Dr Sazzli Shahlan Kasim
16. Prof Dr Shaiful Bahari Ismail
17. Prof Dr Sharifa Ezat Wan Puteh
18. Assoc Prof Dr Uma Devi Palanisamy
19. Dr Nur Amalina Che Bakri
20. Dr Khor Swee Kheng