



PRESS STATEMENT FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE • 23 JUNE 2021

Spend Public Funds Based on Science and Good Judgment

The Malaysian Health Coalition strongly urges the government to only spend public funds based on public health, science and good judgement. Unreasonable decisions without sufficient justification or urgency must be eliminated. Two recent examples of unjustified decisions are the [regular public sanitisation](#) exercise and the purchase of [negative pressure ambulances](#). Unjustified decisions are detrimental to public finances, given the [huge financial need](#) for the overall COVID-19 responses.

We strongly urge the following:

1. Explain spending in the name of public health

The government should explain all public expenditure for public health measures during the COVID-19 pandemic. These measures must aim to manage the pandemic, improve patients' outcome, and be coherent with measures outlined by the World Health Organisation. The government must report public spending in transparent and regularly scheduled ways. The reporting mechanism should include appropriate health economic evaluations with costs and benefits of all decisions. Every *Ringgit* must be accounted for, as good stewards of the public purse.

2. Emphasize evidence-based procurement decisions

We reiterate the importance of evidence-based decisions in procurement decisions for public health. Public health procurement decisions may evolve depending on new data and evidence, but any procurement changes must be guided by clear, sufficient and reliable scientific evidence. Evidence-based procurement decisions are especially important because Malaysia has a low fiscal ceiling and recently tapped into our National Trust Fund. While we will trust the judgment and prioritisation of government leaders, we reserve the right of check-and-balance as responsible citizens in a democracy and responsible professionals in a health system.

3. Acknowledge the voice of experts and the public

For a true all-of-society approach to COVID-19, the government must actively involve experts and the public. This starts with acknowledging the opinions of experts and the public to improve the pandemic responses. The government's deeds must now match its rhetoric. Public participation that reflects two-way trust between the government and its citizens. This is key to a successful COVID-19 response plan.

We reiterate our call for responsible spending of public money based on science. Accountability and transparency are essential to ensure a sustainable, fair and democratic pandemic response.

BERKHIDMAT UNTUK NEGARA.

Malaysian Health Coalition

Full Signature List on myhealthcoalition.org.

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