



PRESS STATEMENT FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE • 17 AUGUST 2021

### **Protect the Rakyat's Health Beyond Political Transitions**

The highest priority of a government is to protect the health and safety of our citizens. Therefore, the Malaysian Health Coalition urges all political leaders to keep the Rakyat's health and welfare at the very top of their priorities. Political transitions must not affect our COVID-19 response, vaccination program and routine healthcare services.

We trust the wisdom and judgment of the Yang di-Pertuan Agong to appoint a new Prime Minister with a strong Cabinet as soon as practicable. For any new Cabinet, these are three important lessons from the political transition in March 2020:

**1. Be transparent**

The new Prime Minister and the Cabinet must acknowledge the ground situation and not hide the truth from the Rakyat. Sharing all pandemic data with high transparency will improve trust, and enable the Rakyat to make more accurate risk assessments for themselves and their families. Data transparency aids in better allocation of resources.

**2. Make evidence-based health decisions**

We urge the government to follow scientific evidence as our understanding of Covid-19 evolves and improves. We also urge the government to publicize their evidence, methodology and rationale for making any important decisions, not merely announcing the decisions in a top-down manner. We urge the government to balance speed with sufficient understanding of the ground situation. Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) must be evidence-based, easy-to-understand and enforced without double standards.

**3. Coordinate between State Governments, Ministries and Civil Societies**

Throughout this pandemic, we have seen that the Health Ministry alone is not enough for us to beat Covid-19. Therefore, we need a strong and coordinated effort between the Federal and State Governments (perhaps through a working Federal-State Council), to ensure effective execution and no overlaps. There must also be strong coordination between all Ministries, especially the health, economic, security and welfare agencies. We also need an all-of-society effort against COVID-19, which requires proactive coordination with civil societies and empowering communities.

To accomplish all that, we urge that the new Cabinet be led by competent professionals, instead of career politicians. In the medium-term, the new government must balance health with the recovery of our economy, democracy and society. In health terms, the new government must provide adequate financial, political and moral support to all healthcare frontliners.

The Rakyat and our health system are increasingly exhausted. Politicians must be part of the solution, not part of the problem. We demand that all political leaders and the new Government of Malaysia to prioritize the Rakyat and our health.

**BERKHIDMAT UNTUK NEGARA.**

**Malaysian Health Coalition** (Full Signature List on [myhealthcoalition.org](https://myhealthcoalition.org))

17 August 2021

**Full signature list:****Organisations**

1. Academy of Medicine of Malaysia
2. Association of Malaysian Optometrists
3. College of Anaesthesiologists
4. Dermatology Society of Malaysia
5. IKRAM Health Malaysia
6. Lung Cancer Network of Malaysia
7. Malaysian Association for Bronchology and Interventional Pulmonology
8. Malaysian Association of Environmental Health
9. Malaysian Dental Public Health Association
10. Malaysian Pharmacists Society
11. Malaysian Society of Anaesthesiologists
12. Malaysian Society of Cardiothoracic Anaesthesiology and Perfusion
13. Malaysian Society of Clinical Psychology
14. Malaysian Society of Occupational Safety and Health
15. Malaysian Society of Ophthalmology
16. Malaysian Thoracic Society
17. Medical Practitioners Coalition Association of Malaysia
18. Pertubuhan Doktor-Doktor Islam Malaysia
19. Public Health Malaysia

**Individuals**

20. Dato' Dr Amar Singh-HSS
21. Dato' Dr Jahizah Hassan
22. Dr Khor Swee Kheng
23. Prof Dato' Syed Mohamed Aljunid Syed Junid
24. Prof Dr Mohd Zamrin Dimon
25. Prof Dato' Dr Mohd Zin Bidin
26. Prof Datuk Dr Zulkifli Ismail
27. Prof Dr Ahmad Hata Rasit
28. Prof Dr Roslina Abdul Manap
29. Prof Dr Sharifa Ezat Wan Puteh
30. Prof Dr Uma Devi Palanisamy
31. Prof Dr Zaleha Abdullah Mahdy