

Move to strengthen lung health services in Malaysia

PETALING JAYA: Malaysia is stepping up efforts to improve respiratory healthcare nationwide through an integrated approach and stronger public-private partnerships, says Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad (pic).

He said his ministry is focused on implementing Malaysia's Lung Health Resolution, adopted at the 78th World Health Assembly (WHA) last year, to strengthen lung health services in Malaysia.

"Twelve months on, the resolution remains highly relevant as many of these same challenges mentioned continue to affect respiratory health outcomes globally today," he said in his speech at the Lung Health Forum to mark the

79th WHA on Monday.

Dzulkefly said the focus would be implementing the resolution through two key strategies.

The first is strengthening of integrated lung health services at the primary care level.

He said this has been done by combining prevention, screening, early detection and referral pathways into a more person-centred healthcare system.

"This approach recognises that many respiratory conditions share common risk factors and frequently coexist within the same populations, requiring coordinated and integrated service delivery rather than fragmented



disease-specific interventions," he added.

Integrated services will include smoking cessation support, vaccinations, tuberculosis treatment services, lung cancer screening, asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease management, occupational health care and structured referral systems.

AI-assisted chest X-ray screening will also be scaled up, including deployment of ultra-portable AI-enabled imaging technologies for underserved and hard-to-reach populations.

The second strategy focuses on strengthening public-private partnerships under the Lung Health

Initiative Malaysia, bringing together nine strategic partners, including the National Cancer Society Malaysia, AstraZeneca and IHH Healthcare Malaysia.

"Through these collaborations, efforts in community engagement, awareness, screening, diagnostics, access to care and patient support will continue to be further strengthened.

"Together, these two approaches reflect the very heart of the resolution advancing an integrated lung health approach through a whole-of-society model," he added.

Dzulkefly said the government aims to implement integrated lung health services in 902 health clinics nationwide by the end of

2026, including 65 clinics with occupational health services.

He added that the ministry will expand these lung health services into workplaces, particularly among frontline and high-risk occupational groups, through its LungShield Programme.

"Integrated lung health services should be embedded within primary healthcare systems as it is the most key platform for prevention, early detection, risk reduction and long-term management of lung diseases.

"The next phase after will be focused on sustained implementation, measurable progress, and stronger collaboration to improve respiratory health outcomes globally," he said.

StarMetro M/S 5, 8

Johor increasing activity centres for elderly folk

Public spaces also being fitted with more senior-friendly features such as barrier-free pathways, special toilets and rest areas

By **MOHD FARHAAN SHAH**
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JOHOR is strengthening efforts to safeguard the well-being of senior citizens through a wide range of initiatives.

State women, family and community development committee chairman Khairin Nisa Ismail said these included expanding community care centres and improving age-friendly infrastructure, implemented through the Welfare Department (JKM) in collaboration with multiple agencies.

"Among key measures is the expansion of Senior Citizens Activity Centre (PAWE), which will increase from 22 centres currently to 27 by this year, with five more planned next year.

"PAWE centres are also being developed into one-stop centres to provide the elderly with easier access to information on various government assistance and services," she said during the state assembly sitting at Bangunan Sultan Ismail in Kota Iskandar.

She said this in reply to Mohd Yusla Ismail (BN-Senggarang) and Nazri Abdul Rahman (PH-Simpang Jeram) who asked about joint efforts in strengthen-



Khairin Nisa says the state wants to ensure that senior citizens continue to live with dignity, security and support within the community. — Handout

ing elderly care in Johor.

Khairin Nisa said the state was also upgrading public infrastructure, including transport hubs, hospitals, community halls and parks, with features such as barrier-free pathways, rest areas, special toilets and clearer signage to be more senior-friendly.

She said digital literacy programmes were being introduced for the elderly as well, under initiatives such as Desa@Digital and community Internet centres to help them adapt to an increasingly digital environment.

"Entrepreneurship pro-

grammes are being rolled out to support active senior citizens, including training in urban farming, handicrafts, food processing, and online business.

"Micro grants and special incentives are also available through agencies such as Tekun and SME Corp to help senior citizens generate income," she said.

Khairin Nisa said community and volunteerism programmes were being encouraged too, with the elderly taking on roles as mentors, trainers or volunteers in schools, libraries and community centres.

She said healthcare services for senior citizens had been enhanced through initiatives by Health Ministry, including mobile clinics and community-based health screenings for those with limited mobility.

"Elderly residents in institutions and care centres also receive regular medical check-ups, vaccinations, dental care and nutritional support, including specialised diets and high-nutrient milk."

She said the Labour Department was safeguarding the welfare of elderly workers by enforcing labour laws and ensuring compliance among employers.

The Social Institute of Malaysia was also offering caregiver training programmes to improve the quality of care for the elderly.

"A dedicated elderly care module is currently being developed by Johor JKM in collaboration with various agencies to further enhance services for senior citizens," said Khairin Nisa.

"All these efforts reflect the state government's commitment to ensuring that senior citizens continue to live with dignity, security and support within the community," she added.

Young vapers face health risks

KL's long-running smoke-free community programme encourages users to quit

Story and photos by GRACE CHEN
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YOUNG people are being warned of the hidden health risks of electronic cigarettes, with anti-drug officials cautioning that vaping can act as a gateway to more severe substance abuse.

Malaysian Anti-Drug Association (Pamadam) member Nor Zaila Arifin stressed that smoking was often the start of more serious substance abuse.

"Vaping is just as dangerous because the liquid used in e-cigarettes contains substances that can harm the body, including chemicals that may damage the

Nor Zaila was manning a booth at Kuala Lumpur Smoke-Free Community Programme (KLBAR) 2026 which was launched by Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Federal Territories) Hannah Yeoh and Kuala Lumpur mayor Datuk Seri Fadlan Mak Ujud.

The event at Gombak Community Centre in Setapak was attended by residents from Gombak Setia People's Housing Project (PPR), Sri Kedah and Seri Langkawi 2 public housing (PA) developments and surrounding areas.

The visitors had access to a range of services, including a mental health assessment and the Smokerlyzer, a breath monitor that measures carbon monoxide (CO) levels and the percentage of blood haemoglobin affected by it.

Hospital Canselor Tuanku Muhriz UKM assistant environmental health officer

Muhammad Sharif Mat Jamal said about 60 people, mostly teenagers, took the test.

"The maximum COHb (carboxyhaemoglobin) reading was 5.43% from someone who smokes one pack of cigarettes a day.

"However, such readings are not permanent and can return to the baseline range of 0.79% to

1.59% within a day."

He said among those who took the test was a 15-year-old brought by his mother to make him aware about the dangers of smoking.

National Anti-Drug Agency (AADK) assistant anti-drug officer Dafee Mohd Zainal said the main issue with vape products was the presence of nicotine, which could be dangerously high.

"Many young people mistakenly believe vaping gives them energy, without realising its harmful effects," he said.

To push the message on the harm of smoking, Fadlan in his speech shared his experience as an ex-smoker.

"I started smoking when I was young, mainly due to curiosity and peer pressure," he said.

"By the time I was in college, I had become a heavy smoker."

Being young and foolish, he even thought that men who smoke appeared "heroic".

However, the harmful effects soon became clear.

"I began to feel my stamina declining. This affected my performance in sports.

"In time, I began coughing up dark phlegm in the mornings." Fadlan said he quit smoking to protect his health, and had not touched a cigarette in 16 years.

Urging smokers and vape users to quit, he said the habit offered no benefit and only increased the risk of illness like lung disease.

Crucially, he highlighted that smoking harmed not only the smoker but also those nearby through second-hand smoke.

Fadlan said Kuala Lumpur had made significant progress in tobacco control, with compliance at smoke-free zones rising from 48.4% in 2019 to 82.4% in 2022.

He added that Kuala Lumpur was also the first city in Malaysia to gazette covered walkways as smoke-free zones in 2017.

KLBAR, which started in 2017,



Fadlan launching KLBAR 2026 with a telling representation of the dangers of smoking.

is a collaboration between Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Health Ministry, AADK, Monash University, Bank Negara Malaysia and local community leaders.

At the same event, Fadlan highlighted dengue as another pressing public health challenge, saying PPR Gombak Setia and PA Seri Kedah had been identified as hotspots with 61 and 15 cases respectively this year.

He said DBKL was working with the Health Department to introduce Wolbachia mosquitoes to reduce the breeding of Aedes mosquitoes, with RM200,000 allocated for the initiative.

"It has been recommended that PPR Seri Kedah and PPR Gombak Setia become model areas for reducing dengue fever cases," he added.



Muhammad Sharif says the test measuring carboxyhaemoglobin is popular among youngsters.

Doctors urge government not to appeal **vape decision**

► Putrajaya should restore poison controls immediately instead of repeating mistakes driven by fiscal interests: MMA

■ BY FAIZ RUZMAN
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PETALING JAYA: Medical practitioners have firmly urged the government not to appeal the High Court's ruling on liquid nicotine, warning against repeating the 2023 mistake of allowing fiscal considerations to override medical advice.

Malaysian Medical Association president Datuk Dr Thirunavukarasu Rajoo said the government should immediately relist liquid nicotine under the Poisons Act 1952 and restore public health safeguards following the court ruling.

The MMA, which appeared as *amicus curiae* in the case, said its position has remained unchanged since the exemption was gazetted in March 2023.

"Since March 2023, MMA has repeatedly issued statements opposing this decision. We warned that removing nicotine from the Poisons Act before any tobacco control law was in place was reckless. We called on the government to relist it. We asked the prime minister to reverse the decision. The record is

there for all to see," Thirunavukarasu said.

He added that the ruling exposed a broader pattern of health policy being shaped by revenue considerations rather than medical evidence.

"The Poisons Board gave unanimous expert advice. It was overruled. The court has confirmed that was wrong. MMA urges the government not to appeal this ruling. Accept it. Learn from it. The health of our children is not a budget line item," he said.

On May 15, the High Court ruled that the government acted unlawfully when it removed vape-related liquid and gel nicotine from the Poisons List in March 2023, a decision signed by then health minister Datuk Seri Dr Zaliha Mustafa.

Judge Datuk Aliza Sulaiman found the move irrational and made without adequate consultation with the Poisons Board, which had unanimously opposed the exemption.

The court also ruled that the decision was primarily driven by economic considerations, noting it followed Budget 2023's proposal to impose excise duties on nicotine vape products.

The exemption created a regulatory gap lasting one year and seven months until the Control of Smoking Products for Public Health Act 2024 came into force on Oct 1 last year.

The ruling has also reignited debate over how the government should recover the revenue it had expected from vape nicotine excise duties.

Galen Centre for Health and Social Policy founder and chief executive officer Azrul Mohd Khalib argued that the government has a clearer alternative - increasing cigarette excise duties instead of challenging the ruling.

"What the government should do now is increase cigarette excise duties to at least RM0.77 per stick. It requires very little administrative or regulatory effort. The collection mechanism is already in place. The government simply needs to amend the excise rate," Azrul wrote in an opinion piece published on the Galen Centre website.

He noted that the Galen Centre estimated in 2025 that such an increase could generate an additional RM771.8 million in tax revenue, significantly higher than the approximately RM209.5 million collected from nicotine vape excise duties since 2023.

However, Azrul cautioned that higher tobacco taxes must be accompanied by stronger Customs enforcement, tighter border controls and action against corruption to effectively curb the illicit cigarette trade.

Say no to tobacco shortcuts

MALAYSIA must reduce smoking. On that, almost everyone agrees. Every day, doctors, nurses, pharmacists, teachers, parents and community advocates see the damage caused by tobacco such as heart attacks, strokes, lung disease, cancer, breathless fathers, grieving families and preventable deaths.

But the answer to one public health crisis should not be written by the same industry that helped create it.

A recent newspaper article argued that Malaysia should learn from Sweden and Japan by embracing smoke-free nicotine products such as heated tobacco, snus and nicotine pouches. The article's message sounds attractive: if people cannot stop smoking give them a "less harmful" product. It uses the language of science, pragmatism and harm reduction. The article was authored on behalf of Philip Morris International (PMI), a company that shipped nearly 617 billion cigarettes globally in 2024, more than the year before. Its interest in shaping our tobacco policy is commercial, not altruistic.

But Malaysians deserve the full picture.

Yes, burning tobacco is a major reason cigarettes are so deadly. Combustion produces many toxic chemicals that damage the lungs, heart and blood vessels. But it is misleading to jump from that truth to the conclusion that tobacco-industry alternatives should be promoted as proven public health solutions. Less smoke does not mean no harm. Less exposure to some chemicals does not automatically mean lower disease, lower addiction or better population health.

Heated tobacco products still deliver nicotine, a highly addictive drug. They still expose users to harmful substances. The World Health Organisation has repeatedly cautioned that heated tobacco products are toxic, contain carcinogenic emissions and have not

been proven to help smokers quit. The Union for International Cancer Control stated plainly in 2024: "There is no evidence that smokeless products reduce smoking rates".

That distinction matters. In medicine, we do not recommend a treatment because a company says it is innovative. We ask: Does it work, is it safe, who benefits, who is harmed and who is paying for the message?

The Sweden story is also more complicated than the advertorial suggests. Sweden's low smoking rate is often presented as proof that oral nicotine products solved the problem. But smoking prevalence is not the same as total nicotine use.

A country can have fewer smokers while still maintaining high nicotine dependence through other products. Independent public health organisations, including AT Switzerland and the Smoke Free Partnership, have called the "Sweden model" narrative a coordinated tobacco industry campaign, one that deliberately obscures decades of strict tobacco regulation, comprehensive advertising bans, significant taxation and well-funded cessation programmes that drove Sweden's smoking decline.

Sweden's own Public Health Agency was unequivocal in 2025: "There is nothing in the research showing that snus or white snus is an effective smoking cessation tool." And the unacknowledged reality in Sweden is that e-cigarette use among young people aged 16-29 has doubled in just two years, from 6% to 10%, as a new generation becomes nicotine-dependent through different products.

Public health success should not be measured only by fewer cigarettes sold, but by fewer people addicted, fewer young people initiated, fewer diseases, and less industry influence.

Japan's example also needs caution. Cigarette sales declined after heated tobacco products entered the market, but that does not prove that millions

truly quit nicotine. Much of the shift may represent product substitution, and dual use remains a concern.

Independent analyses have questioned whether heated tobacco products actually help smokers quit. Dual use of cigarettes alongside heated tobacco products remains a serious concern, and the US FDA, when reviewing IQOS (PMI's brand name for its leading portfolio of heated tobacco products), declined to authorise claims that it reduces disease risk, finding that for dual users, "the risk for disease or mortality is unlikely to be substantially reduced".

Even more troubling, leaked documents from a foreign company have raised serious concerns about covert influence, hidden research relationships and attempts to manufacture support for heated tobacco products or IQOS among policymakers and professionals.

This is the industry playbook, and it is familiar. In the 1970s and 1980s, tobacco companies promoted "light," "mild" and "low-tar" cigarettes as safer alternatives. They proved to be no safer at all.

Today, the same script is used for heated tobacco products and nicotine pouches. The language changes; the commercial logic does not. This is why conflict of interest matters.

Tobacco companies are not neutral health educators. Their obligation is to shareholders, not patients. If their new products replace one form of dependence with another, the business model survives. Public health, however, must aim higher: fewer smokers, fewer nicotine users, fewer addicted adolescents and fewer deaths.

Malaysia has already taken an important step through the Control of Smoking Products for Public Health Act 2024. This law recognises that cigarettes, vapes, heated tobacco and other nicotine products all require serious regulation. It is not "anti-innovation" to regulate addictive



The US FDA, when reviewing IQOS, declined to authorise claims that it reduces disease risk. - REUTERS/ARND WIEGMANN/FILEPIC

products. It is responsible governance.

The article also states that Malaysia's smoke-free goal is under 5% by 2045. Malaysia's official tobacco endgame target is actually under 5% smoking prevalence by 2040. That five-year difference is not small. It reminds us why public health messaging must be accurate, transparent and independent.

At Universiti Malaya, Malaysia's leading university, our responsibility is not only to treat disease but to protect society from preventable harm. In hospitals and clinics, we meet the consequences of tobacco not as statistics, but as human beings: a young stroke patient, a breathless COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease) patient, a father with chest pain, a family waiting anxiously outside resuscitation.

Malaysia does not need a shortcut designed by the tobacco industry. We need stronger enforcement, higher-quality cessation services, access to proven therapies such as nicotine replacement therapy and approved medicines, trained quit-smoking counsellors, school-based prevention, protection of children from marketing and honest public education.

For adult smokers who are struggling to quit, compassion is

essential. They should not be shamed. They should be supported with evidence-based treatment. But compassion for smokers must not become permission for tobacco companies to recruit a new generation into nicotine dependence.

The real question is not whether Malaysia should "try what works". Of course we should. The real question is: who gets to define what works? For Malaysia, the answer must be clear. Not the tobacco industry. Not advertorials. Not selective international comparisons.

Our path must be guided by independent science, public health ethics and the duty to protect our children. That is what truly works.

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To kill or not to kill

ONE of the biggest misconceptions around hygiene is that more removal equals more protection.

"Kills 99.9 per cent of germs", for example, has become the default promise across hygiene products.

The assumption that stronger always means safer deserves a closer look, says Sateera senior scientific advisor Professor Dr Lai Chin Wei.

In practice, most everyday expo-

sure to microbes is either harmless or plays a role in maintaining the skin's natural microbial balance, including beneficial bacteria that help support our body's first line of defence, he explains.

In addition, not every situation requires the same level of intervention.

Using maximum-strength products in low-risk settings does not provide additional benefit. In some cases, it simply introduces unnecessary stress on the skin over time.

The products we use daily were designed with maximum effectiveness

in mind. In high-risk environments such as hospitals, during illness, or where infection control is critical, this approach makes sense.

But everyday routines are not high-risk environments. Yet many people apply the same level of strength across all situations, from casual hand sanitising to daily cleansing.

"What started as a precaution has

quietly become a habit. The effects are not always immediate, but they are increasingly common," Lai says.

Skin often feels drier than before or becomes more reactive as a result

of overexposure to high-strength hygiene routines.

Clinical and dermatological studies have shown that frequent hand-washing, particularly more than eight to 10 times a day, is associated with a higher risk of skin irritation and eczema.

"The issue is not hygiene itself, but how often and how intensely it is applied," says Lai.

This becomes particularly relevant in areas of the body that are cleaned frequently. In oral care, for example, research has shown that repeated use of strong anti-septic mouthwashes can alter the natural balance of the oral microbiome.

While stronger, high-kill products have a clear role in high-risk situations where rapid protection is needed, for routine, repeated use throughout the day, gentler formulations are more suitable.

In everyday settings, applying the strongest option is not always the safest choice. It may simply be more than what is necessary.

Smarter hygiene is not about doing more, but about knowing when enough is enough.

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Using maximum-strength products in low-risk settings does not provide additional benefit. In some cases, it simply introduces unnecessary stress on the skin over time. PICTURE CREDIT: FREEPIK

RM50 mln in federal funds for 6 rundown S'wak health facilities

19TH SARAWAK
DEWAN UNDANGAN NEGERI
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Reports by Marilyn Ten, Desiree David,
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Umpang Photos by Chimon Upon

KUCHING: The federal government has allocated RM50 million for six dilapidated health facility projects in Sarawak, said Deputy Premier Datuk Amar Dr Sim Kui Hian.

The Minister of Public Health, Housing and Local Government said the six projects are currently in the pre-implementation stage and pending tender advertisement upon completion of the design process by Sarawak Public Works Department (JKR).

"The projects involved are the Santubong Health Clinic (KK) in Kuching, KK Tepus in Selangau, KK Kuala Lawas in Lawas, KK Tun Abang Haji Openg in Subis, KK Tanjung Bijat in Sri Aman, and the Isolation Ward at the Emergency and Trauma Department of Sarawak General Hospital (SGH)," he said in his ministerial winding-up speech.

Dr Sim said for this year, the Ministry of Health (MoH) has allocated RM5.7 million for upgrading, renovation and repair works at 15 Kks and one district health office in Sarawak.

He also said as of April 30 this year, the Sarawak Health Department has received RM2.75 billion in operating funds and RM507.3 million in development



Dr Sim poses with his ministerial winding-up speech.

funds from the MoH.

"These funds are allocated for operational expenses, human capital development, minor upgrading and repair on health facilities, as well as for hospital and clinic support services including procurement of medical equipment."

On the progress of the new Lawas Hospital project, he said

physical progress had reached 97.39 per cent as of April 20 this year.

"The project is expected to be completed and fully operational by December 2026. The MoH will be conducting door-to-door inspection, followed by a partial handover prior to the relocation of hospital services to the new facility," he said.

As for the Petra Jaya Hospital, Dr Sim said the project's physical progress stood at 91.55 per cent as of April 25, 2026.

"The revised date of completion after EOT (Extension of Time) No. 5 is July 14, 2026 (EOT No.5). The contractors are finalising the internal finishing preparing for the installation of medical equipment.

"Upon handing over, Petra Jaya Hospital can begin operating in phases," he added.

Dr Sim also informed that the upgrading and repair works for two Kks have been approved under the 12th Malaysia Plan, namely KK Nanga Budu which received a total allocation RM582,055, and KK Roban which received an allocation of RM779,024.35 under the Bitara Madani initiative.

He said the improvements will enhance operational efficiency, increase service capacity, and improve the overall quality of healthcare services provided to the surrounding population.

He also said two new clinics—KK Nanga Atoi in Saratok and KK Nanga Ngungun in Kanowit—were approved with a total estimated cost of RM12.8 million.

"KK Nanga Atoi was successfully completed and handed over on April 15, 2026 while KK Nanga Ngugun is expected to be completed in 2027," he added.

Meanwhile, another two projects that are in the final phase—KK Lawas and KK Tabuan Jaya—are expected to be operational by the third quarter of this year.



Wee (front centre) and Dr Ngian on his left join others in a group photo.

Building safe environment for healthcare workers everyone's responsibility — Mayor

KUCHING: Healthcare workers are the backbone of the whole system who, every day, are exposed to hazards from infections, chemicals, and physical strain as well as workplace violence and mental stress, said Datuk Wee Hong Seng.

The Kuching South mayor stressed that this group must first be protected if society were to expect them to care for others.

He highlighted this at the opening of Occupational

Safety and Health Week 2026 themed 'Prevent Today, Protect Tomorrow', held at the Sarawak General Hospital (SGH) Clinical Research Centre here Monday.

"Building a safe environment is everyone's responsibility, from leadership to frontline staff. Safety is not the responsibility of one unit, one department or an officer only—it is everyone's responsibility.

"A strong safety culture is built when every individual chooses to act, to speak up, and to take preventive measures

seriously," he said in his speech.

The mayor also called for proactive efforts to be carried out, from risk assessments and training programmes to emergency preparedness and health surveillance.

"These are investments in people, and in the future of our healthcare system," he added.

Among those present at the ceremony were SGH director Dr Ngian Hie Ung and Public Health Department head Dr Wong Khung Ying.

Kesihatan mental perlu jadi agenda nasional

Di kedai kopi, di media sosial mahupun di Parlimen, isu kos sara hidup terus menjadi perbualan utama rakyat Malaysia. Harga barang meningkat, tekanan kewangan bertambah dan ramai yang sedang berusaha untuk terus bertahan dalam keadaan ekonomi yang semakin mencabar.

Namun sebagai Penaung Persatuan Kesihatan Mental Malaysia (MMHA), saya melihat ada satu lagi 'kos' yang jarang dibincangkan secara serius — kos terhadap kesihatan mental rakyat.

Ia tidak tercatat dalam angka inflasi atau laporan ekonomi, tetapi kesannya sangat nyata. Tekanan hidup berpanjangan sedang melelahkan emosi, meretakkan hubungan keluarga dan secara perlahan menghakik ketahanan jiwa masyarakat kita.

Sempena Bulan Kesedaran Kesihatan Mental pada Mei ini, saya merasakan Malaysia tidak lagi berada pada tahap sekadar meningkatkan kesedaran. Kita kini berada pada tahap yang memerlukan tindakan lebih berani dan menyeluruh.

Data Tinjauan Kebangsaan Kesihatan dan Morbiditi (NHMS) menunjukkan bahawa seorang daripada tiga rakyat dewasa di negara ini berdepan dengan cabaran berkaitan kesihatan mental. Di sebalik angka itu, ada kisah sebenar — seorang ayah yang hilang arah kerana tekanan kewangan, seorang ibu yang memendam keresahan sendirian dan anak



PERSPEKTIF

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MUDA ZAHEEDA
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muda makin sukar melihat harapan terhadap masa depan mereka.

Di MMHA, kami melihat sendiri bagaimana golongan B40 dan belia menjadi antara kelompok yang paling terkesan. Apabila keperluan asas semakin mahal, ketenangan jiwa sering menjadi perkara pertama yang terkorban. Tekanan kewangan bukan lagi sekadar isu ekonomi; ia sudah menjadi isu kesejahteraan dan keselamatan sosial.

Malangnya, akses kepada bantuan masih belum memadai. Di banyak kawasan luar bandar, mendapatkan rawatan atau

sokongan psikologi bukan sesuatu yang mudah. Jumlah pakar psikiatri dan kaunselor masih tidak mencukupi, jauh daripada nisbah yang disarankan di peringkat antarabangsa.

Keadaan ini tidak boleh dibiarkan berlarutan. Jika kita benar-benar mahu membina sebuah masyarakat yang sejahtera dan berdaya tahan, kesihatan mental mesti diberi perhatian yang sama penting seperti kesihatan fizikal dan pembangunan ekonomi. Kita memerlukan komitmen yang lebih jelas daripada semua pihak.

Kerajaan perlu melihat kesihatan mental sebagai agenda nasional yang merentasi kementerian dan sektor. Peruntukan dalam Bajet Negara untuk perkhidmatan kesihatan mental wajar diperkukuhkan, termasuk sokongan kepada NGO seperti MMHA yang sering menjadi tempat pertama rakyat men-



Kerajaan perlu melihat kesihatan mental sebagai agenda nasional yang merentasi kementerian dan sektor.

cari bantuan dan sokongan emosi.

Dalam masa yang sama, usaha memperkukuh sistem sokongan komuniti juga amat penting. Langkah dekriminialisasi percubaan bunuh diri merupakan perkembangan yang baik, tetapi ia perlu disusuli dengan akses rawatan, pemulihan dan sokongan psikososial yang lebih menyeluruh.

Majikan juga mempunyai peranan besar. Budaya kerja yang lebih manusiawi, ruang sokongan emosi di tempat kerja dan pemahaman terhadap isu *burnout* bukan lagi sesuatu yang boleh dianggap remeh. Menjaga kesejahteraan mental pekerja bukan sekadar soal kebajikan, tetapi juga pelaburan terhadap produktiviti dan kestabilan organisasi.

Kita tidak boleh terus menunggu sehingga tekanan yang dipendam bertukar menjadi krisis yang lebih besar. Kesihatan mental bukan satu kemewahan. Ia adalah hak setiap insan.

Tidak salah untuk seseorang itu berasa

penat, cemas atau tidak kuat sepanjang masa. Yang lebih membimbangkan ialah apabila mereka yang memerlukan bantuan tidak tahu ke mana harus pergi atau takut untuk bersuara kerana stigma masyarakat.

Sudah tiba masanya kita menjadi masyarakat yang lebih mendengar, lebih memahami dan lebih cepat bertindak.

Malaysia yang benar-benar sejahtera bukan hanya diukur melalui pertumbuhan ekonomi atau pembangunan fizikal, tetapi melalui keadaan rakyatnya — sama ada mereka mampu hidup dengan tenang, bermaruah dan mempunyai sokongan ketika berdepan kesukaran.

Kesihatan mental perlu diletakkan di meja paling utama dalam agenda nasional negara.

"Che Puan Muda Zaheeda Mohamad Ariff ialah Raja Puan Muda Kedah. Tuanku merupakan seorang peguam terlatih, aktivis kesihatan mental dan Penaung Diraja Persatuan Kesihatan Mental Malaysia"

Pengisian rohani bantu tenangkan pesakit, waris

Arafah #QuranHour 2026 usaha mengukuhkan kesejahteraan spiritual di HRPZ II

Oleh ADILA SHARINNI WAHID

KOTA BHARU - Usaha memperkukuh ketenangan jiwa dan kekuatan emosi dalam kalangan pesakit serta waris dilihat seiring dengan pendekatan pengisian rohani yang diketengahkan menerusi penganjuran Arafah #QuranHour 2026 pada 26 Mei ini.

Pengarah Hospital Raja Perempuan Zainab II (HRPZ II), Dr Izamin Idris berkata, waris pesakit sebenarnya berdepan tekanan emosi yang lebih tinggi kerana perlu melalui pelbagai situasi sepanjang proses rawatan ahli keluarga mereka.

Menurut beliau, keadaan itu memerlukan sokongan berterusan bukan sahaja kepada pesakit, tetapi juga kepada penjaga yang berada di sisi mereka.

"Waris ini kadang-kadang lebih tertekan berbanding pesakit kerana mereka memikirkan banyak



Kakitangan HRPZ II turut menyokong penganjuran Arafah #QuranHour pada 26 Mei ini.

perkara termasuk keadaan kesihatan, kos dan tanggungjawab menjaga ahli keluarga yang sakit.

"Sebab itu penting untuk kita beri perhatian kepada emosi dan rohani mereka supaya mereka lebih kuat menghadapi ujian ini," katanya.

Beliau berkata demikian sempena kempen Arafah #QuranHour 2026 anjuran Persatuan Rumah Ngaji Negeri Kelantan (PRNNK) di HRPZ II di sini pada Ahad.

Program bertemakan Ummah Berbudi dan Penyayang, Satu Kebangkitan itu akan berlangsung serentak di seluruh negara pada 26 Mei ini dengan lokasi utama di Kelantan diadakan di Masjid

An-Nur, Kota Kubang Labu di sini.

Dr Izamin berkata, pendekatan hospital mesra ibadah yang dilaksanakan di HRPZ II turut membantu memberi sokongan kepada pesakit dan waris dari sudut rohani, termasuk bimbingan ibadah seperti solat serta penghayatan al-Quran sebagai sumber ketenangan.

Katanya, bacaan ayat-ayat syifa' dalam al-Quran memberi kesan positif kepada emosi pesakit serta membantu menenangkan keadaan psikologi mereka ketika menerima rawatan.

"Al-Quran ini bukan sekadar bacaan, tetapi memberi ketenangan dan kekuatan kepada pesakit

serta waris yang sedang berdepan ujian kesihatan.

"Dalam masa yang sama, ia juga membantu petugas kesihatan untuk lebih empati dan memahami keadaan emosi pesakit serta keluarga mereka," katanya.

Beliau berkata, pengisian seperti Arafah #QuranHour 2026 dilihat seiring dengan usaha memperkukuh aspek kesejahteraan holistik dalam sistem kesihatan yang tidak hanya tertumpu kepada rawatan fizikal semata-mata.

Menurutnya, pendekatan berteraskan spiritual dan emosi itu penting dalam membantu pesakit dan waris menghadapi cabaran dengan lebih tenang serta positif.