



MINISTRY OF HEALTH MALAYSIA

OFFICIATING SPEECH

YANG BERTHORMAT DATO HAJJAH HANIFAH HAJAR TAIB
DEPUTY MINISTER OF HEALTH MALAYSIA

9TH ASIA-PACIFIC CONFERENCE ON PUBLIC HEALTH

**THEME: *CLOSING THE PUBLIC HEALTH GAP THROUGH
TECHNOLOGY, PARTNERSHIP & PEOPLE***

6 JULY 2026 (MONDAY) | 11.30 AM
DOUBLTREE BY HILTON, GRAND BALLROOM, LEVEL 11,
JOHOR BAHRU

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INTRODUCTION

Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh, Salam Sejahtera, Salam Malaysia Madani, and a very good morning.

1. First and foremost, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the Organising Committee for inviting me to stand here with you today in Johor Bahru for the **9th Asia-Pacific Conference on Public Health 2026**.
2. This year's theme, "**Closing the Public Health Gap through Technology, Partnership & People**," hits right at the heart of what our entire region is facing. Across the Asia-Pacific, we are dealing with a heavy burden of non-communicable diseases like diabetes, heart disease, and obesity, which are unfortunately affecting younger populations increasingly. At the same time, we must handle mental health challenges, an ageing population, and persistent gaps in healthcare access.

ADDRESSING HEALTH EQUITY AND CLOSING THE GAP

3. The reality is that health progress hasn't been shared equally. Where a person lives or how much they earn shouldn't dictate how healthy

they get to be. Our job is to make sure the benefits of healthcare reach everyone.

4. When we talk about gaps in public health, we are talking about real people and real lives. A family living in a big city can often see a specialist easily, access to digital health services from their phone, or buy fresh and healthy food nearby. But for a family living in a rural village or a lower-income community, life is very different. A simple visit to the doctor may mean taking a day off work, losing a day's income, and travelling long distance on difficult roads or even through rivers just to receive basic healthcare.
5. This is why we cannot look at healthcare as just hospitals and clinics. The reality is that progress in health has not always been shared equally. Where a person lives, their socioeconomic circumstances, their level of education, their access to technology, and even their health literacy can significantly influence their health outcomes. Therefore, we must build accessibility whether through smarter technology, closer partnerships, or active community programs to make sure our healthcare system wraps around everyone, leaving no one behind.
6. A national example that we are rolling out is the **Clinic Care Management System (CCMS)** in our government clinics. This digitizes patient records, coordinates doctor queues, and allows seamless cross-clinic access. We are sharing these digital public

health frameworks as case studies for developing further the health systems.

7. Therefore, to close the public health gap, the Ministry of Health is transforming Malaysia's healthcare system by strengthening primary care, expanding digital health services, improving disease prevention, and using technology and integrated data to ensure quality healthcare reaches every community, especially those in underserved and remote areas.
8. Align with the pillar of the conference, we must also recognize that technology itself is not the solution. Technology is a tool. Its value depends on how we use it and who benefits from it. Innovation must remain people-centered. It must be accessible, inclusive, and responsive to the needs of all communities. If we are not careful, technology can widen existing gaps. If we use it wisely, it can become one of our strongest tools for advancing health equity.

PARTNERSHIPS TRANSFORM PUBLIC HEALTH

9. The second pillar of this conference is partnership. Today's public health challenges are too complex for any one ministry, organization, or country to solve alone. Health is shaped not only by healthcare, but also by education, housing, the environment, food systems, employment, and many other factors. This is why we must work together across sectors and across borders. Therefore, we must

broaden our scope of collaboration to encompass a One Health approach. We cannot speak of human health in isolation from the relation of health of our planet.

10. As we aggressively pursue scientific and medical breakthroughs, we must remain equally steadfast in protecting the natural heritage and biodiversity that sustains life. Malaysia and the broader Asia-Pacific region are blessed with some of the world's richest biodiversity, offering immense potential for scientific discovery and medical innovation.
11. However, ecosystem disruption and environmental degradation directly threaten our food systems, air quality, water security, and consequently, our mental and physical well-being. When biodiversity is compromised, the equilibrium breaks, leading to the rise of new and re-emerging infectious diseases.
12. Our partnerships must therefore bridge health sectors, environmental agencies, academic bodies, and civil society. By preserving our invaluable natural heritage while driving responsible innovation, we build a resilient foundation for future generations. When we learn from one another's successes and failures across borders, our collective impact becomes far greater.
13. Recent global health emergencies have reminded us that solidarity is not just a value, it is a necessity. When governments, researchers, healthcare professionals, communities, and industry come together, we build stronger, more resilient health systems. By sharing our

knowledge, experiences, and innovations, we can find better solutions to the challenges we all face.

14. Solving them requires a true whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach where universities share climate-health research, industry partners develop green solutions, and civil society works directly with vulnerable communities. When we openly share data, strategies, and resources across the Asia-Pacific, we build a united regional defense, proving that we can only close our public health gaps by moving forward together.
15. This is what makes the Asia-Pacific Conference on Public Health remains such an important platform. Beyond the scientific presentations and technical discussions, this conference serves as a catalyst for innovation, collaboration, and policy dialogue. It provides a space where ideas can evolve into partnerships, and where partnerships can ultimately translate into meaningful action.

PEOPLE: THE HEART OF PUBLIC HEALTH

16. The final pillar of this conference, and perhaps the most important, is **people**. At the heart of public health are the people we serve. Our goal is not only to prevent disease, but to protect lives, improve well-being, and create healthier communities where every individual and family has the opportunity to live a meaningful life.

17. To achieve this, communities must be more than recipients of healthcare, they must be our partners. By listening to their voices, understanding their needs, and involving them in shaping solutions, we can build public health programmes that are more effective, inclusive, and sustainable.
18. At the same time, we must continue investing in the people who dedicate their lives to protecting public health. Our healthcare professionals, researchers, public health practitioners, and frontline workers are the backbone of our health system. When we empower and support them, we are not only strengthening our workforce, we are building a healthier, more resilient future for generations to come.
19. Achieving better public health is not the responsibility of the Government alone. It requires strong partnerships across every sector of society. **Recognizing this, the Malaysian Government continues to strengthen Public-Private Partnerships** by working closely with private healthcare providers, industry, academia, non-governmental organizations, and community leaders to expand access to quality healthcare, accelerate innovation, and deliver better health outcomes for all Malaysians. These collaborations allow us to combine expertise, innovation, and resources, enabling us to respond more effectively to emerging health challenges while ensuring that quality healthcare remains accessible to every community.

20. These partnerships are reinforced by the Government's continued commitment to investing in the nation's health. Through sustained funding for the Ministry of Health, the Government continues to strengthen hospitals and primary healthcare facilities, expand preventive and public health programmes, support digital health transformation, invest in medical research and innovation, and develop a highly skilled healthcare workforce.
21. Financial support has also enabled initiatives to improve rural healthcare access, enhance disease surveillance and emergency preparedness, and ensure that essential healthcare services remain affordable and accessible for all Malaysians. These are not merely investments in our healthcare system; they are investments in healthier lives, stronger and productive communities, and a more resilient nation. **These efforts are guided by a simple principle: every individual deserves the opportunity to achieve the best possible health, regardless of where they live or their circumstances.**

CLOSING

22. We cannot make this shift if we keep working in isolated silos. If there is one core message I want to focus on today, it is the need to build a truly connected **health ecosystem**.
23. To the young researchers and future health leaders here today, please keep asking questions, stay curious, and don't be afraid to challenge old boundaries to find better solutions for our people.

24. I wish all participants a highly productive and meaningful conference over these next three days. May the knowledge shared and the policy dialogues, SPARK forums, and symposia held directly enhance our clinical outcomes, strengthen our healthcare systems, and secure a brighter, healthier, and more equitable future for the communities we serve.
25. Let's make sure that every new technology we adopt and every partnership we form ultimately serves our families, our communities, and the generations to come. When technology serves people, when partnerships are rooted in mutual trust, and when communities are placed at the very center of our efforts, closing the public health gap shifts from a vision into a reality.
26. On that note, I would once again like to congratulate the organizers, sponsors, presenters, and delegates for making this conference possible. I wish all delegates a highly productive, enriching, and successful conference.

With that, it is my great pleasure to officially declare the **9th Asia-Pacific Conference on Public Health (APCPH) 2026 open.**

Wabillahi Taufiq Wal Hidayah Wassalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh. Thank you.
