

Statement by Reproductive Rights Advocacy Alliance Malaysia (RRAAM)

RRAAM Urges Government to Halt Ministry of Health Budget Cuts That Threaten Access and Essential Care

30 April 2026

Reproductive Rights Advocacy Alliance Malaysia (RRAAM) strongly objects to the proposed RM3.06 billion reduction to the Ministry of Health's budget, which threatens to reverse significant gains and deepen existing inequalities in access to healthcare in Malaysia. Malaysia's public healthcare system already navigates structural and operational challenges, including a rising demand for services, ageing facilities and an overstretched workforce. A funding cut as proposed pushes an already strained system closer to a breaking point.

We believe reductions in the Ministry of Health's budget will have tangible and immediate consequences. Essential services ranging from primary care and maternal health to chronic disease management and preventative programmes will face major disruptions, delays or scaling back.

Medications may become less accessible or inconsistently available in public facilities, referrals to multidisciplinary care (including pain specialists or mental health support) may be limited, and overstretched healthcare professionals may have less time for patient-centred consultations. Government healthcare workers, who are already managing heavy workloads, will be further overburdened. Ultimately, compromising the quality and care of services delivered to individuals across Malaysia.

Taking endometriosis as an example, a RM3.06 billion reduction to the Ministry of Health will likely cause huge barriers for women and girls with endometriosis, especially those who are seeking treatment in public hospitals. For diagnosis of endometriosis, access to gynaecologists, ultrasound or MRI imaging, and in some cases laparoscopic surgery are all resource intensive.

This irrational decision could mean fewer specialist clinic availability, longer referral pathways from primary care, and delays in elective surgeries such as diagnostic laparoscopy. For a condition that already takes an average of 6-8 years to diagnose, this could extend suffering further. The impact does not stop at diagnosis. Endometriosis care requires ongoing follow-up, access to hormonal treatments, pain management, and sometimes fertility services.

These sweeping budget cuts also risk deepening gendered inequalities, as sexual and reproductive health services, already chronically underfunded and overlooked, are often the first to be sidelined.

We call on policymakers to immediately withdraw this proposed budget cut. Healthcare funding is not optional, it is a core responsibility and a fundamental obligation. A reduction of this scale is not just a policy decision, it is a direct risk to lives and economic stability.

Communities with the least resources, including vulnerable and low-income groups, rural populations, women and girls requiring reproductive health services, queer communities, older people, individuals living with chronic diseases and persons living with disabilities (PwD), will bear the brunt of these cuts. Reduced access to quality and affordable healthcare services will exacerbate already large healthcare disparities which will lead to higher long-term costs for both individuals and the healthcare system.

This risks reinforcing a cycle where patients disengage from the public system or turn to private care they cannot afford. Ultimately, such reductions undermine Malaysia's efforts to build structured, equitable care and widen the gap between those who can access timely, quality care and those who continue to suffer in silence.

Endorsed by:

1. *Reproductive Rights Advocacy Alliance Malaysia (RRAAM)*
2. *Endometriosis Association of Malaysia (MyEndosis)*
3. *All Women's Action Society (AWAM)*
4. *Women's Aid Organisation (WAO)*
5. *SIS Forum (Malaysia)*
6. *Association of Women Lawyers (AWL)*
7. *SIUMAN Collective*
8. *PurpleLily Social Association Kuching*
9. *Klima Action Malaysia (KAMY)*
10. *Family Frontiers*
11. *Reproductive Health Association of Kelantan (ReHAK)*
12. *ENGENDER Consultancy*
13. *Equal Wings*
14. *Society for Equality, Respect and Trust for All Sabah (SERATA)*
15. *SEED Malaysia*