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Integrate Vision Care into Holistic Public Health

In conjunction with World Sight Day, the Malaysian Health Coalition (MHC) and the Malaysian Society of Ophthalmology (MSO) jointly call for attention and proactive efforts to be given towards preserving the vision health of the public.

We call for the following:

1. Implement routine annual eye screening among at-risk populations.

Short-sightedness (or myopia) is worsened by increased screen time and gadget usage especially among children and younger adults. The growth of indoor digital learning is also observed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. To help prevent myopia, we recommend that all primary and secondary schools allow periods of rest for children, including outdoor time. We also call for compulsory annual eye screening to be carried out for all school-age children. Similarly, individuals aged 40 and above should also receive routine annual eye screening, especially those with diabetes and hypertension. Early detection followed by timely intervention are vital to preserve optimal visual function.

2. Eliminate dubious and misleading advertisements for eye products.

Social media has been manipulated by irresponsible parties to sell dubious products advertised for eye treatment. Their marketing often promotes health claims that are callous, misleading and are not based on evidence. We would like to advise the public against purchasing such products. Patients opting for alternative therapies without discussing with their eye doctor risk worsening their condition. We urge the authorities to take firm action against perpetrators who provide dubious or misleading advertisements. Effective law enforcement combined with demands from informed consumers are necessary to combat the sale of these unsafe products.

3. Practice strict adherence to workplace eye safety.

There have been many instances of serious and blinding ocular injuries at workplaces which are [preventable](#). We urge the Department of Occupational Safety and Health and relevant OSH units in companies to enforce safer working environments for all workers. Employers must provide proper safety gear including appropriate safety eyewear. This is followed by strict usage of personal protective equipment amongst all workers. Office workers are also encouraged to ensure they have the necessary eye correction. The general 20-20-20 rule of looking away from the devices every 20 minutes for at least 20 seconds at an object 20 feet away or more should be implemented as a standard practice in office settings.

4. Strictly regulate and enforce consumer fireworks.

One of the preventable contributors to ocular injuries are fireworks-related incidents. We would like to echo the International Council of Ophthalmology (ICO) [call](#) for strict regulation on consumer fireworks. Increased ocular injuries due to fireworks are common especially during festive seasons, both [locally](#) and [internationally](#). Several legislations have already been made in many countries to strictly regulate fireworks use. It is only befitting for Malaysia to adjust our law and enforcement efforts on this matter accordingly in order to reduce accidents caused by fireworks.

Preventative measures are crucial to protect healthy vision. We call for the relevant authorities and the public to collectively safeguard this important asset both at a national and individual capacity.

BERKHIDMAT UNTUK NEGARA.

Malaysian Health Coalition & Malaysian Society of Ophthalmology

(Full Signature List on myhealthcoalition.org)

8 OCTOBER 2022

Full signature list:

Organisations

1. Academy of Medicine of Malaysia
2. Association of Malaysian Optometrists (AMO)
3. Association of Private Hospitals Malaysia
4. Asthma Malaysia
5. IKRAM Health
6. College of Anaesthesiologists
7. College of Ophthalmologists
8. College of Physicians
9. College of Surgeons
10. Dermatology Society of Malaysia
11. Family Medicine Specialists Association
12. Islamic Medical Association Malaysia (IMAM)
13. Lung Cancer Network of Malaysia
14. Malaysian Association of Bronchology and Interventional Pulmonary
15. Malaysian Association of Dental Public Health Specialists
16. Malaysian Association of Environmental Health
17. Malaysian Association of Medical Assistants
18. Malaysian Dental Association
19. Malaysian Health Diplomacy Foundation
20. Malaysian Medical Association
21. Malaysian National Society of Audiologists
22. Malaysian Nurses Association
23. Malaysian Paediatric Association
24. Malaysian Pharmacists Society
25. Malaysian Society of Anaesthesiologists
26. Malaysian Society of Geriatric Medicine
27. Malaysian Society of Clinical Psychology
28. Malaysian Society of Intensive Care
29. Malaysian Society of Occupational Safety and Health
30. Malaysian Society of Ophthalmology
31. Malaysian Thoracic Society
32. Medical Mythbusters Malaysia
33. Medical Practitioners Coalition Association of Malaysia
34. MedTweetMY
35. MMA Public Health Society
36. National Cancer Society Malaysia
37. Obstetrical and Gynaecological Society of Malaysia
38. OpsHarapan
39. Perinatal Society of Malaysia
40. Pertubuhan Doktor-doktor Islam Malaysia (PERDIM)
41. Public Health Malaysia
42. Public Health Physicians Association

Individuals

1. Tan Sri Dr Abu Bakar Suleiman
2. Prof Dr Ahmad Hata Rasit
3. Dato' Dr Amar Singh-HSS
4. Prof Dr Asri Said
5. Dr Ganabaskaran Nadason
6. Prof Datuk Dr Lokman Hakim

7. Tan Sri Dr Mani Jegathesan
8. Prof Dr Mohd Zamrin Dimon
9. Prof Dato' Dr Mohd Zin Bidin
10. Prof Dr Raja Affendi Raja Ali
11. Prof Dr Roslina Abdul Manap
12. Prof Dr Sazzli Shahlan Kasim
13. Prof Dr Shaiful Bahari Ismail
14. Prof Dr Sharifa Ezat Wan Puteh
15. Prof Dr Zaleha Abdullah Mahdy
16. Prof Datuk Dr Zulkifli Ismail
17. Assoc Prof Dr Uma Devi Palanisamy
18. Dr Khor Swee Kheng
19. Dato' Dr Jahizah Hassan

Coordinated by: Ahmad Aizat Zaini