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Bridging Policy and Practice: Malaysia Charts a Value-Based Future in Healthcare

By: Dr. June Choon

Value-Based Healthcare Conference 2025 |
Sheraton Petaling Jaya | 9 July 2025

In a landmark gathering held on 9th July 2025, the Ministry of Health (MOH) and the Pharmaceutical Association of Malaysia (PhAMA) brought together leading minds across government, academia, and industry for the Value-Based Healthcare (VBHC) Conference 2025. Themed "Outcomes that Matter, Access that Delivers," the conference sought to move Malaysia's health system toward a more sustainable, patient-centric model—where value, not volume, drives investment and care.

This VBHC Conference builds on the momentum of earlier Health Economics Forums initiated during my tenure in Monash University Malaysia, and most recently, the 7th Health Economics Forum in 2024, organised by Centre for Drug Policy and Health Economics Research (CDPHER), Universiti Teknologi MARA. These initiatives laid the groundwork for a more evidence-informed healthcare ecosystem – where data, economics and strategic collaboration shape national policy and improve patient outcomes.

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This year, I had the honour of representing CDPHER, UiTM, and to be entrusted by PhAMA and MOH to curate the conference programme and speaker line-up. This role reflects the unique position academia holds in the Malaysian healthcare ecosystem—as a neutral convener, trusted thought leader, and catalyst for bridging policy and practice. By working alongside MOH and PhAMA to shape the agenda, CDPHER helped ensure the discussions were grounded in evidence, strategically aligned, and inclusive of diverse perspectives.

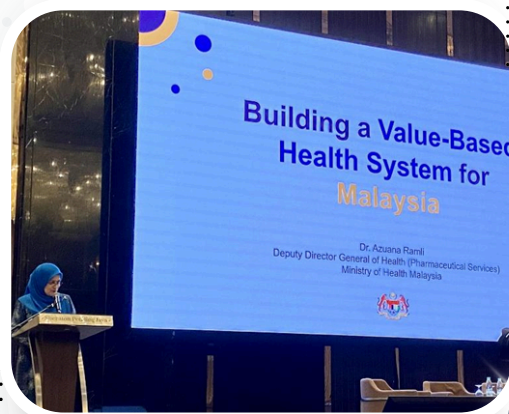


The event was officially officiated by YB Mr. Sim Tze Tzin, Member of Parliament for Bayan Baru and Member of the Public Accounts Committee (PAC), who underscored the need for greater transparency, fiscal accountability, and evidence-based policymaking in public healthcare spending. His presence signalled growing parliamentary attention to systemic reforms in healthcare financing and delivery. The event commenced with welcome remarks from Ms. Kam Ai Teng, PhAMA President, followed by a powerful keynote by Dr. Azuana Ramli, Deputy Director General of Health (Pharmaceutical Services).

Dr. Azuana articulated the Ministry's vision for building a value-based health system in Malaysia—one that focuses on patient outcomes, health equity, and long-term system sustainability. She emphasized the need for reforming care delivery and financing models to ensure that healthcare investments truly translate into meaningful health gains for the population.

YB Mr. Sim Tze Tzin, Member of Parliament Bayan Baru, Member of Public Accounts Committee.





Dr. Azuana Ramli, Deputy Director General of Health (Pharmaceutical Services), Ministry of Health



L-R: Dr. Nur Sufiza binti Ahmad (Deputy Director, Pharmacy Practice & Development Division, MOH), Ms. Chan Li Jin (Executive Director, PhAMA), Dr. June Choon (Head, Centre for Drug Policy and Health Economics Research, Faculty of Pharmacy, UiTM), Dr. Azuana Ramli (Deputy Director General of Health (Pharmaceutical Services), MOH), Ms. Kam Ai Teng (President, PhAMA) and Professor Dato' Dr. Abu Bakar Abdul Majeed (Dean, Faculty of Pharmacy, UiTM)

In Panel Session I, titled “From Policy to Practice: Transforming Access Pathways,” The dialogue that captured the essence of health system reform. Moderated by Dr. Na Wei Lun, this session featured Dr. Azuana Ramli, Professor Kenneth Lee (Monash University Malaysia), and UiTM’s very own, Professor Dr. Rohana Abdul Ghani, all of whom brought clinical, policy, and economic lenses to bear on the question of how value-based approaches can improve access. The panellists discussed the barriers to adopting VBHC—such as data infrastructure, misaligned incentives, and resistance to change—and proposed actionable pathways to move from pilot initiatives to system-wide adoption.

The importance of real-world evidence (RWE) as a cornerstone of value-based decision-making was spotlighted in Plenary Talk I by Ms. Leyla Andrea Hernandez Donoso, Senior Director of RWE at Novo Nordisk. Her talk highlighted how countries in the Asia Pacific region are using RWE not only to demonstrate therapeutic value but also to inform reimbursement and coverage decisions in resource-constrained settings. She stressed that for Malaysia to scale value-based models, investments in robust data infrastructure and outcome measurement systems are critical.

In Plenary Talk II, Ms. Deepti Saraf, PhAMA Vice President and HTA Task Force Co-Chair, explored how societal values must be integrated into health technology assessment (HTA) and policy decisions. Her session, titled “From Value to Access: Integrating Societal Perspectives in Decision-Making,” challenged the audience to consider health not just in terms of cost-effectiveness, but in terms of societal impact, equity, and long-term value creation.

The highlight of the day was Panel Session II, “Investing in What Matters: Alternative Financing and Health Outcomes,” which featured a compelling address by Mr. Khairy Jamaluddin, former Minister of Health. In his remarks, Mr. Khairy offered a sobering reflection: “COVID-19 exposed the fragility of our healthcare system. If we don’t invest in it today, the next crisis will hit harder—and history will repeat itself.” He called for bold and innovative financing reforms to ensure that future generations inherit a resilient and equitable health system. The session, moderated by Dr. Ginsky Chan, also featured Dr. Muhammed Anis (ProtectHealth) and Professor Asrul Akmal Shafie (USM), who discussed mechanisms like outcome-based contracts, risk-sharing models, and the role of third-party payers in aligning incentives with value.



L-R: Mr. Khairy Jamaluddin (former Minister of Health), Dr. Muhammad Anis (ProtectHealth)

and Professor Asrul Akmal Shafie (Universiti Sains Malaysia) and moderator Dr Ginsky Chan (UTAR)

Plenary Talk III by Dr. Abdullahi Sheriff, PhAMA Board Director, shifted the focus to the private sector’s evolving role in VBHC. He stressed that the pharmaceutical industry must move beyond transactional relationships and become long-term partners in health outcomes. This involves co-creating solutions with regulators and providers, adopting transparent value metrics, and embracing shared accountability for results.

The final session of the day—Panel Session III, “Collaboration for Better Outcomes in Value-Based Healthcare”—was a fitting close to the event. Moderated by Ms. Chan Li Jin, PhAMA Executive Director, the panel brought together Dr. Izzuna Mudla (Head of MaHTAS, MOH), Ms. Sarah Chan (Novo Nordisk), and Mr. Anwar Anis (Asia OneHealthcare).

The speakers emphasised that true system transformation requires multi-stakeholder partnerships built on trust, data sharing, and aligned goals. They discussed ongoing and future opportunities for public-private collaboration, including co-developing outcome indicators, integrating care pathways, and scaling up successful pilot programmes.

L-R: Mr. Nur Azmi Badarulzaman (Pharmacy Department, Hospital Al-Sultan Abdullah UiTM), Professor Dato’ Dr Abu Bakar Abdul Majeed (Faculty of Pharmacy, UiTM),

Dr. June Choon (Faculty of Pharmacy, UiTM), Professor Dr. Rohana Abdul Ghani (Faculty of Medicine, UiTM), and Mr. Nathan Kothandaraman (Johnson & Johnson Malaysia)



As the conference drew to a close, it was clear that a value-based approach to healthcare is no longer an aspiration—it is a necessity. The pandemic has laid bare the vulnerabilities of Malaysia's current system, and the window for reform is now. Yet transformation cannot occur in silos. The conference underscored the need for strategic partnerships between government, industry, and academia, each bringing their strengths to the table. The government provides stewardship and policy direction, industry brings innovation and delivery capacity, and academia ensures that the transformation is grounded in evidence and guided by integrity.

Health Economics as a Policy Imperative

In parallel with this, I was recently engaged by the Pharmaceutical Services Programme, Ministry of Health Malaysia, as an external consultant to support the development of a new Pharmacoeconomics Framework for the selection and listing of medicines into the MOH National Formulary (or affectionately called the blue book) under the Dasar Ubat Nasional (DUNas)/Malaysian National Medicines Policy, Fourth Term (2022-2026). As I led focus group discussions with consultants in different therapeutic areas and policymakers in the Drug Working Committee, the engagement reflects the growing institutional recognition that health economics is no longer a 'nice-to-have' but a 'must-have' in ensuring transparent, equitable, and cost-effective medicine access. It also highlights the increasingly vital role of academics trained in health economics, who are now being called upon to help shape real-world policy and strengthen healthcare decision-making at the national level.

*Collaborating with the
Formulary Unit,
Pharmaceutical Services*

*Programme, MOH, to
gather insights from
clinical consultants across
diverse therapeutic areas
at Putrajaya International
Convention Centre (PICC)*



At CDPHER, we are proud to be part of this national journey. By continuing to serve as a trusted knowledge partner to both the MOH and the private sector, we aim to support Malaysia in realising a health system that truly delivers outcomes that matter, and access that delivers.



About the author

Dr. June Choon is a health economics researcher and the current Head of Centre for Drug Policy and Health Economics Research (CDPHER). She serves on various advisory boards for multinational pharmaceutical companies and the Ministry of Health. Her passion lies in improving patient access to innovative medicines in Malaysia.

Today's Quiz

1 Why is health economics increasingly viewed as a "must-have" in Malaysia's national healthcare decision-making, particularly in the selection and listing of medicines into the MOH National Formulary?

Health economics is essential for ensuring transparent, equitable, and cost-effective access to medicines. It provides a structured framework to assess value for money and allocate limited resources efficiently—vital in formulating decisions on which medicines should be included in the MOH National Formulary under the Dasar Ubat Nasional (DUNas)

2 How does the integration of pharmacoeconomic principles into national health policy reflect Malaysia's commitment to value-based healthcare?

It demonstrates Malaysia's shift toward outcomes-focused healthcare. By embedding pharmacoeconomics in policymaking, the system moves from volume-based to value-based investments—ensuring healthcare spending translates into real health gains and long-term system sustainability

3 What role does academic expertise play in supporting evidence-based policy reform in Malaysia's healthcare system, as illustrated by CDPHER's involvement with MOH and PhAMA?

Academia serves as a neutral, evidence-driven partner that bridges policy and practice. Through initiatives like curating the VBHC Conference and consulting on the Pharmacoeconomics Framework, CDPHER helps align national reforms with robust data, stakeholder perspectives, and global best practices