

Health Ministry to roll out youth mental health plan in 2025

By [Hana Naz Harun](#) - December 4, 2024 @ 3:56pm



Deputy Health Minister Datuk Lukanisman Awang Sauni revealed that the number of mental health issues had doubled between 2019 and 2023. - NSTP/DANIAL SAAD

KUALA LUMPUR: The Health Ministry will introduce the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Action Plan next year to tackle the growing mental health issues among youth, the Dewan Rakyat was informed today.

Deputy Health Minister Datuk Lukanisman Awang Sauni revealed that the number of mental health issues had doubled between 2019 and 2023.

He also stated that the action plan was being developed in collaboration with the World Health Organisation and the United Nations Children's Fund.

"To tackle the issue of mental health among children and adolescents, the Health Ministry has taken various initiatives, including establishing the Mental Health

National Centre of Excellence and the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Action Plan (which is in progress)," Lukanisman said.

"We expect the action plan to be launched next year."

Lukanisman was responding to a supplementary question from Dr Halimah Ali (PN-Kapar), who asked if the government had made a detailed, comprehensive study on the root cause of mental health problems.

He also answered a question from Syed Ibrahim Syed Noh (PH-Ledang) regarding the statistics of mental health issues among university and school students.

Lukanisman said based on statistics from the National Health and Morbidity Survey (NHMS), mental health problems among school and tertiary education students had doubled from 7.9 percent (424,000) in 2019 to 16.5 percent (922,318) in 2023.

Findings from NHMS showed an increase in the prevalence of suicidal behaviour over a 10-year period, he said.

Lukanisman said the prevalence of suicidal thoughts among teenagers increased from 7.9 per cent in 2012 to 13.1 percent in 2022.

Suicide plans rose from 6.4 percent in 2012 to 10 percent in 2022, while suicide attempts also increased, from 6.8 percent in 2012 to 9.5 percent in 2022," he said.

Meanwhile, Lukanisman said studies by the Health Ministry had found that mental health problems were influenced by various factors, including urban design and implementation of urban development.

"Population density also contributes to this issue. For instance, the prevalence of suicide among the community, especially teenagers, is higher in densely populated residential areas," he said.

Lukanisman said the ministry also provided mental health services in 1,088 government health clinics, 68 hospitals, 37 Mental Health Community Centres, and the placement of 200 psychology (counseling) officers on a contract-for-service basis at districts and health clinics.

The ministry, he added, was also working to increase the number of child and adolescent psychiatrists to 30 by 2027, up from the current number of 18.

Lukanisman said the government would collaborate with NGOs, including the National Coalition for Mental Wellbeing, Malaysian Counseling Association, and others, to conduct community-based mental health advocacy.