

# BUILDING RESILIENT HEALTH SYSTEMS: THE CRITICAL ROLE OF PRIMARY HEALTH CARE AND NATIONAL HEALTH INSURANCE

*Membangun Ketahanan Sistem Kesehatan: Peran Penting Pelayanan Kesehatan Dasar dan Jaminan Kesehatan Nasional*

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## Abstract

This editorial article explores the critical role of primary health care (PHC) in building resilient health systems, particularly within the context of Indonesia's National Health Insurance (JKN) program. It emphasizes the importance of universal access to comprehensive health services as a fundamental aspect of effective PHC. The discussion highlights best practices for strengthening PHC, including enhancing collaboration between public and private sectors, improving information exchange, and establishing quality evaluation systems. The article also addresses significant challenges, such as workforce shortages and coordination issues between primary and secondary health services. Furthermore, it underscores the necessity of developing suitable assessment tools, such as the Primary Care Assessment Tool (PCAT), to evaluate and enhance PHC services tailored to local needs. The findings suggest that addressing poverty is essential for improving access to health care, requiring collaborative efforts across various societal sectors. Overall, the article advocates for sustained investment in PHC to achieve better health outcomes and resilience in health systems.

Keywords: Health Insurance, Health System, Primary Health Care

The Indonesian Journal of Health Administration Volume 12 No. 2 (2024) has been published. This edition covers a wide range of main topics, and from several of these topics, we can highlight their contributions to strengthening primary health care (PHC).

Primary health care plays a crucial role in both national and global health systems, especially amid increasingly complex health challenges today. By focusing on accessibility, quality, and efficiency of services, PHC can significantly contribute to better health outcomes and a more resilient health system.

Lukito and Gani (2024) discuss the implementation of primary health care systems in various countries, emphasizing the importance of universal access to comprehensive health services. This article provides important insights into best

practices for strengthening PHC, with adaptable approaches tailored to the local context of each country.

Various priorities for implementing PHC policies have emerged, including: enhancing collaboration between the public and private sectors, improving information exchange through technology and health literacy, establishing quality evaluation systems, and promoting community-based training programs. However, challenges such as workforce shortages, particularly in rural areas, and poor coordination between primary and secondary health services must be addressed (Lukito and Gani, 2024).

In Indonesia, strengthening PHC is crucial for improving access, quality, and efficiency of health services. The technological advancement and increasing public health awareness underscore the

pressing need for a responsive and integrated health system. PHC serves as a gateway for communities to access quality health services and as a preventive measure through health education and promotion.

Globally, the WHO recommends strengthening PHC as a primary strategy to achieve universal health goals. According to the World Health Organization (2019), a strong health system based on PHC can improve health outcomes, reduce service costs, and increase public satisfaction with health services. Countries that prioritize PHC investments tend to demonstrate better health outcomes and greater resilience in facing health crises (World Health Organization, 2019).

In Indonesia, strengthening PHC aligns with the National Health Insurance (JKN) program, which aims to provide equitable access to health services for all segments of society. Research showed that improving access to primary health services can reduce maternal and infant mortality rates (Hone *et al.*, 2023) and enhance the overall health status of the community (Gizaw, Astale and Kassie, 2022).

The National Health Insurance is a significant factor in strengthening PHC. Research by Ainy *et al.*, (2024) found that individuals with positive perceptions of the JKN program are more likely to enrol. The findings also indicate that efforts to simplify the JKN registration process and enhance information accessibility can encourage wider participation. Primary health services can be improved by tailoring programs and interventions based on local needs, including considering community perceptions of service quality.

For these reasons, an appropriate Primary Care Assessment Tool (PCAT) is needed to evaluate and enhance PHC services. Ningsih, Surjoputro and Budi, (2024) conducted a scoping review to provide an overview of the development of PCAT in various countries, including Malawi, Vietnam, China, Uganda, Spain, Korea, and Colombia. Each version of the PCAT is adapted to the local context, incorporating perspectives from both patients and service providers. This article

demonstrates that developing the PCAT can help assess and improve the quality of primary health care focused on community needs.

However, a global challenge that must be prioritized for resolution is poverty, which is a critical factor to address to ensure accessibility to health services. Yesi *et al.*, (2024) conducted a panel data analysis across 34 provinces from 2018 to 2022, finding that poverty levels, health insurance ownership, and ability to pay are significant factors affecting access to health services. This research emphasizes that improving access to health services is not solely the responsibility of the health sector but also requires collaboration from various elements of society.

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