

## **MEDIA RELEASE THE COALITION OF AFFORDABLE MEDICINES INDONESIA FOR 3RD PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES DEBATE ON EDUCATION, HEALTH, EMPLOYMENT, SOCIAL AND CULTURE THEMES, 17 MARCH 2019**

### **Protect Access To Medicines To Fulfill The Rights Of People's Health**

Jakarta, 16 March 2019 – The Coalition of Affordable Medicines Indonesia demands that the problems regarding the high price of medicines, especially medicine for catastrophic diseases in Indonesia, became the focus of the discussion for the future Indonesian presidential candidates. Because access to medicines, is the key to ensure the state guarantees to fulfill the rights of Indonesian people's health. The Coalition considers that the issue of drug prices is one of the factors in the problem of BPJS health deficit. BPJS Kesehatan is the health care system in Indonesia.

Muhammad Teguh Maulana, Research and Advocacy Staff of Indonesia for Global Justice (IGJ) for Health and Labor Issues explained that due to the high prices of drugs, several types of cancer drugs such as Trastuzumab, Cetuximab and Bevacizumab should be removed from the BPJS Kesehatan - Indonesia Health Care System. He conformed, "This is to save the high budget for treatment of catastrophic diseases." Based on the percentage, heart disease required most of the treatment cost (52 percent), then cancer (16 percent), stroke (13 percent), kidney failure (12 percent), thalassemia or blood disorders (2.3 percent), hemophilia or blood clotting disorders (1.7 percent), hepatitis (1.6 percent), and leukemia (1.5 percent).

He added, another thing that will make the drug prices more expensive is "the Threats arising from the existence of FTA and Investment Agreements that is currently being negotiated by Indonesia." The threat arises from the inclusion of TRIPS-Plus provisions which will confirm the patent monopoly dominance by transnational pharmaceutical companies (Big Pharma).

### **Barriers to Treatment Access for Dialysis Patients**

In addition to cancer, other catastrophic diseases facing the problems due to the deficits in BPJS Kesehatan are hemodialysis patient. The issues of hemodialysis patients for drug accessibility due to the disparity in rates between types of hospitals that affect patients who take hemodialysis in clinics type D, do not get the drugs needed. In this case, the Government is still discriminatory in determining tariffs that have an impact on the quality of patients' life.

According to Tony Samosir, from the Indonesian Hemodialysis Patients Community (KPCDI), "Recently, BPJS Kesehatan has established a tiered referral system regardless of the patient's disease type and geographical conditions. The policy of BPJS Kesehatan which requires each user to update the referral letter is very burdensome hemodialysis patients. "This is also due to the physical condition of hemodialysis patients who continues degenerate, disability, orphans, paralysis and the elderly.

### **Simplify the Access of Rare Generic Drugs**

Likewise for the access of rare disease drugs those are mostly included as catastrophic diseases, causing disability and life threatening. There are around 6000-7000 types of rare diseases, which if the total number of patients can reach 10% of the population, but unfortunately, so far, there have not received attention from the government. The lack of

availability of rare disease drugs patent (due to the complicated licensing process) especially the generic version, makes the patient's family have to hunt for drugs to foreign countries, which means only well-off patients can survive.

Indriani Ginoto, Chair of Pulmonary Hypertension Association of Indonesia, urged, "The government to cut license at BPOM and intervene to assist in the procurement of rare generic drugs as completely as possible in Indonesia." In addition it also provides relief in the form of tax deductions for drugs and medical devices in Indonesia.

### **Monopoly on ARV Drugs and Utilization of TRIPs Flexibilities**

Meanwhile, the fate of patients with infectious diseases who are highly dependent on access to medicines through the government program is not better. Such as for cases of HIV / AIDS that experience a crisis of availability of ARV drugs for PLWHA. The reason is the delay in the procurement of antiretroviral drugs due to suspected corruption because of the high price differences between drugs purchased by the government and the market. Then this alleged corruption case also proves the monopolistic practice of several ARV drug producers in Indonesia.

Patients need candidates who care and brave to utilize the Flexibilities of TRIPs mechanism. According to Aditya Wardhana, Executive Director of Indonesia AIDS Coalition (IAC), "This was done by issuing a Presidential Decree Number 76 of 2012 related to the use of patent by government." The way is by expanding the scope of the presidential regulation to include other essential life saving medicines not only Antiretroviral (ARV). Thus, ensuring patient access to the qualified medicines could be more affordable.

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