

PUBLIC HEALTH LEADERSHIP: THE NEED FOR INDONESIA

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Sir,

Disease outbreaks and epidemics drawing worldwide attention emphasize the successful roles of public health professionals. In Indonesia, public health leaders have been questioned for their competences and policy stances. It can be seen from the today's public health problems, which are more complex compared to the 20th century. There is widespread recognition that the challenges posed by stroke, diabetes mellitus, tuberculosis, HIV AIDS, alcohol, smoking, fake vaccine, Zika virus, disparities between rich and poor, and natural emergencies (i.e., earthquakes, floods), which can cause poor population health outcomes to include morbidity and mortality.¹

Public health leaders have a major role to play in addressing these complex challenges. Public health approaches are required to save lives and promote wellness of Indonesian survivors. The roles of public health leadership often call for

far-reaching decisions that will affect the health of community.² Although sometimes it is difficult to make decision, even to gain consensus on defining the problem and determining a solution.³ Pros and cons are often raised by context and culture, questions regarding whether it is even 'appropriate' for government, the private sector, religious groups or others to be involved in potential solutions. Not surprisingly, the sense of chaos is often created from the simultaneous collision of all these many dimensions.³ However, decisions must be made despite conflicting data, divergent opinions, and competing political agendas. Public health leaders in this regard require an understanding of current and emerging community health issues, and public health practice science.

In line with that, public health institutions in Indonesia are demanded to provide adequate training program and leadership curriculum to the present and the next generation to have the skills include the ability to guide organizational

behavior and cultivate interorganizational relationships, apply scientific knowledge to public health problems, and build and sustain community coalitions.^{4,5}

Literatures identify four essential components of an optimally effective executive training program in public health leadership: exposure to the core scientific disciplines within public health; exposure to organization theory and management science; training in community development and empowerment; and training in ethics and social justice. In addition, the doctoral-level training in public health practice is also needed.^{4,5}

In conclusion, Indonesia has a big task in dealing with public health problems that requires the competent public health leaders to stretch their minds and souls in almost unimaginable ways.³ Indonesia needs well-trained leaders who are able to lead effectively and have ability to build strong collaborative networks and teams at every level of the public health system, from politicians and policymakers to the mass media and the public. However, to produce high quality public health leaders, their education and preparedness should be of concern to everyone, and provide the support necessary to educate those professionals to improve population health during the coming century in Indonesia.⁵

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