

New coalition formed to fight heart disease across Asia

- Patients, allied health professionals, **academia**, corporate partners and a global health think-tank launch the Asia-Pacific Cardiovascular Disease Alliance (APAC CVD Alliance) to battle CVD across Asian health systems.
- The APAC CVD Alliance will engage policymakers, patients, professionals, academia, non-profits, and implementation partners to champion increased attention and innovations for CVD.
- The Alliance is keen to work with more patients in Asia – reach out at apac-cvd.org/partner-with-us

Today, patient organizations, allied health professionals, **academia**, corporate partners and a global health think-tank came together to launch the **Asia-Pacific Cardiovascular Disease Alliance** (APAC CVD Alliance), a multisectoral coalition committed to improving heart health and reducing the CVD burden across nine health systems in Asia.¹

CVD is the leading cause of death in the Asia-Pacific, with the largest increase in premature deaths occurring in East Asia, South Asia, and Southeast Asia over the last 20 years.² In 2019 alone, over 10 million people died of heart disease in Asia, making up 35% of all deaths in the region.³

With **four** strategic partners – the Asia-Pacific Federation for Clinical Biochemistry and Laboratory Medicine (APFCB), Global Alliance for Patient Access (GAfPA), Global Heart Hub (GHH), **Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Faculty of Medicine** – and corporate partners Amgen, Novartis, and Roche Diagnostics, the APAC CVD Alliance aims to:

- Increase public and policy awareness of the importance of tackling CVD at regional and domestic forums in Asia;
- Encourage implementation of scalable and sustainable CVD innovations across all health systems, and
- Emphasize that fighting CVD is a much-needed investment for healthy societies and productive economies.

Growing affluence, rapid urbanization, and aging populations in Asia present health systems with an increasing burden of CVD's direct and indirect costs and poor health outcomes.

“Accurate and rapid diagnoses for people with CVD is fundamental to all health systems”, said **Dr Tony Badrick, President, APFCB**. “As the largest clinical biochemistry and laboratory federation in Asia, we have seen that investing in capacity building and education of laboratory professionals are essential for early detection and treatment of CVD and other non-communicable diseases. The APAC CVD Alliance’s mandate to elevate policy awareness dovetails with the APFCB’s goal of encouraging continual improvements to laboratory practices in the region.”

¹ Australia, China, India, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, Thailand, and Vietnam.

² Peltzer K, Pengpid S. Prevalence, risk awareness and health beliefs of behavioural risk factors for cardiovascular disease among university students in nine ASEAN countries. *BMC Public Health*. 2018;18(1):237. Published 2018 Feb 13. doi:10.1186/s12889-018-5142-1

³ Zhao D, et al. Epidemiological Features of Cardiovascular Disease in Asia. *JACC: Asia*. 2021 Jun, 1 (1) 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jacasi.2021.04.007>

“To tackle the rise of CVD in the region, we first have to confront the barriers that prevent patients from accessing quality cardiac management in their healthcare systems. Together with our alliance partners, Amgen aims to unify multi-sectorial efforts towards the common goal of recognizing and overcoming these challenges. Success for us means creating sustainable solutions that provide more effective, longer term care for patients in the region”, said **My Linh Kha, Senior Vice President and General Manager, Amgen Japan and Asia Pacific.**

The APAC CVD Alliance will adopt a patient-centered approach across the entire CVD care continuum – prevention; early detection; treatment, cardiac rehabilitation, and step-down care.

Brian Kennedy, Executive Director, GAfPA said, “We are proud to partner the APAC CVD Alliance to advance patient engagement with clinicians and healthcare providers in the Asia-Pacific. With diverse stakeholders, we can ensure that patients’ voices are heard and that policies are developed with the patient at the center.”

“We are excited to join the APAC CVD Alliance to provide a global voice for those affected by CVD in Asia”, added **Neil Johnson, Executive Director, GHH.** “As a long-time heart patient advocate, I believe we can make a real difference for patients and their families by partnering professionals and policymakers in Asia.”

“According to the World Heart Federation, 80% of cardiovascular disease, including heart disease and stroke, is preventable. This is a shocking reality and calls for urgent action”, said **Iris Zemzoum, President, Novartis Asia Pacific, Middle East and Africa.** “At Novartis, we envision a world where CVD is eliminated so patients can live longer and healthier lives. This alliance is a powerful example of forging sustainable partnerships across the healthcare ecosystem and working together to find innovative ways to unblock the barriers that stand in the way of heart health.”

Building interdisciplinary, multisectoral partnerships are essential to unite CVD action across borders, especially with varied socio-economic and cultural diversity in the Asia-Pacific.

“CVD control cannot be accomplished with clinicians alone”, said **Dr Fazah Akhtar Hanapiah, Dean, UiTM Faculty of Medicine.** “As one of Malaysia’s top medical schools, we look forward to co-creating innovative solutions that bring together multidisciplinary healthcare professionals and other partners along the care continuum to prevent and treat those living with CVD.”

“A healthier, equitable future requires a renewed focus on chronic disease management and a willingness to look beyond physical symptoms. Chronic conditions such as heart disease come at a high personal cost to the person living with it, their families and communities. The Alliance provides an excellent platform to raise awareness around heart health. More importantly, it creates a collective opportunity to bring multiple voices that are critical to driving better healthcare for patients, lowering cost to society and creating a national push for greater access to cardiovascular disease innovations”, said **Lance Little, Head of Region, Asia Pacific, Roche Diagnostics Asia Pacific.**

Based in Singapore as its regional hub for Southeast Asia, global health think-tank ACCESS Health International is the secretariat for the APAC CVD Alliance.

ACCESS Health International (Asia) President Dr Krishna Reddy said, “The Alliance aims to harness the existing good work in tackling CVD in the Asia-Pacific. ACCESS Health is proud to be the secretariat for this regional initiative and we look forward to improving

investment in CVD innovations in policies, care models, products, or services across all health systems.”

We are keen to work with more patients in Asia. We’d love to have a chat at apac.cvd.org/partner-with-us

The Alliance is made possible with the support of Amgen, Novartis, and Roche Diagnostics. Read our commitment to transparency at apac-cvd.org/how-we-work

About the Alliance

The APAC CVD Alliance is a multisectoral, multistakeholder coalition dedicated to improving heart health for patients, societies, and economies by elevating public and policy awareness about CVD at regional and domestic forums in Asia. Alliance strategic partners are the Asia-Pacific Federation for Clinical Biochemistry and Laboratory Medicine, the Global Alliance for Patient Access, the Global Heart Hub, and **Universiti Teknologi MARA Faculty of Medicine**, with Amgen, Novartis and Roche Diagnostics as corporate partners. ACCESS Health International is the secretariat for the Alliance based in Singapore.

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