

Malaysia

# Don't work in private hospitals if you cannot accept dress codes, medical association tells healthcare staff

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S. Subramaniam said his ministry has already enforced some guidelines for Muslim nurses in government hospitals. — File pic

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Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr S. Subramaniam said his ministry has already enforced some guidelines for Muslim nurses in government hospitals.

"We have already enforced some for the Muslim nurses in government hospitals like the headgear and which area they can wear short sleeves. Private hospitals can enforce their own guidelines," he told *Malay Mail Online* via phone.

On Friday National news agency Bernama reported that Naziah Sauni Samat was threatened with sacking after she refused to wear a short sleeved uniform.

Online news portal *Malaysiakini* then reported the hospital's reply to the issue, with its finance and administration manager saying that the nurse's sacking was due to a disciplinary issue.

Damai Service Hospital's Regina Sundram was quoted as saying that their dress code was set since 1998 and added that short sleeves "prevent bacterial infection".

KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 6 — Healthcare workers who feel they cannot accept the dress code imposed by private hospitals should not work there, the Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) has said after a Muslim nurse was sacked for refusing to wear short-sleeved uniform.

MMA president Dr Ashok Zachariah Philip said that private hospitals should be able to come up with their own dress code without interference.

"A private hospital should be allowed to draw up their own dress codes, so long as they do not contravene any law.

"All employees should be informed about the dress code. If they feel they cannot accept it they should not accept the job," he told *Malay Mail Online* via email.

He added that if dress codes are imposed, they should be based on science and patient's well-being instead on religion.

"Any dress code in hospitals must be based on scientific evidence. If there is evidence that long sleeved tunics spread infection from patient to patient, we must see how this can be overcome," I Philip added.