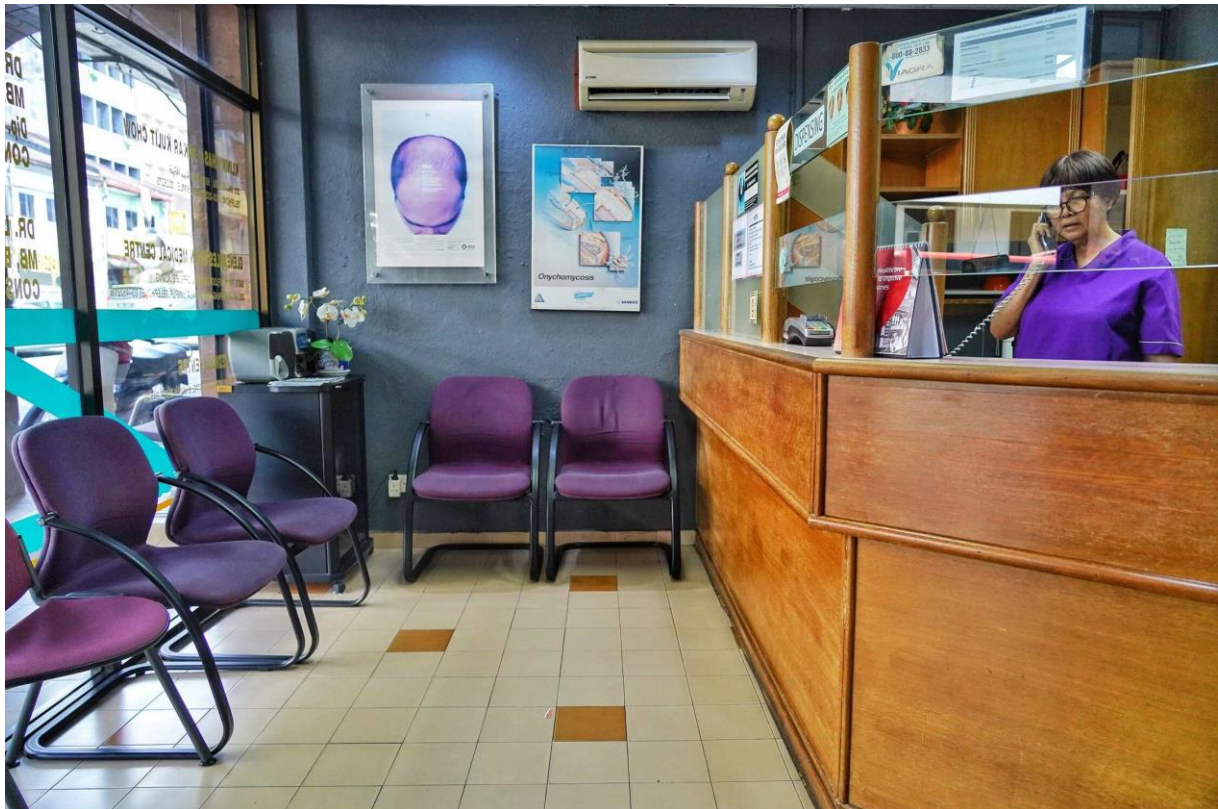


Resolve Legal Issues Before Rolling Out Medicine Price Display — Malaysian Medical Association

By CodeBlue | 12 March 2025

MMA questions using the Price Control and Anti-Profitteering Act 2011 to regulate private clinics already under the Private Healthcare Facilities and Services Act 1998. It says GPs aren't retailers but prescribe and sell meds only after consultation.



The dispensary at a private general practitioner (GP) clinic in Kuala Lumpur. Photo taken by Saw Siow Feng on February 3, 2020.

The Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) acknowledges the concerns raised by general practitioners (GPs) regarding media reports on March 10 quoting the health minister as saying that medicine price display will begin from May 1, 2025.

At the recent engagement by the minister with GPs and other stakeholders on February 27, MMA and all GPs present had expressed strong objection to this directive.

This objection to the mandatory price display is due to the significant consequences it poses to primary health care and the fact that GPs are not retailers but professionals who prescribe and subsequently sell medications only based on indications after consultation and examining of patients.

GPs believe that this directive may lead to misunderstandings about health care costs, disrupt doctor-patient relationships, and place additional administrative burdens on already overstretched clinics.

More critically, it risks driving patients away from private clinics, ultimately overburdening an already burnt-out government health care system.

At the engagement, the minister had also stated that for GPs, the medicine price display will not be implemented until the new private GP consultation fees under the 7th fee schedule is reviewed and gazetted.

At the same engagement, the MMA leadership present had also brought up to the minister their concerns and views on the legal standing of the provisions under Act 723 (Price Control and Anti-Profiteering Act 2011) being used as the basis to implement this directive of medicine price display at private clinics.

These legal questions which were brought up needs to be looked into and answered before going forward.

It is also MMA's stand that GPs are already under the ambit of the Private Healthcare Facilities and Services Act (PFHSA) 1998 (Act 586) and therefore, should not be under the control and enforcement of another agency via another Act i.e. Act 723. The PHFSA (Act 586) is and should remain the only basis of regulation of medical practice.

MMA requests that all the questions and queries on the legality of Act 723 that were brought up by MMA and others at the engagement be clearly and thoroughly looked into before any decision is made on the gazettelement, implementation, and enforcement of the provisions of Act 723 to the private health care sector.

We respect the right of GPs to advocate for our profession and patients. We urge all parties to engage in a constructive dialogue to find a balanced solution that ensures transparency in health care while maintaining quality medical services.

We urge the authorities to listen to the voice and concerns of GPs and work towards policies that benefit both health care providers and the public.

Dr Kalwinder Singh Khaira is president of the Malaysian Medical Association.