



Review two-decade old fee schedule, not force GPs to display prices, says MMA

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PETALING JAYA: It is time for the authorities to review the general practitioner clinics' fee schedules stagnant for two decades instead of forcing them to display medicine prices, says the Malaysian Medical Association.

The association which has over 17,000 members said the stagnant fee schedule is straining over 12,000 clinics nationwide facing rising operating costs and even forcing some to close, which ultimately means less medical access for patients.

"We urge for a thorough review and update of the GP fee schedule, an issue which has been brought up by MMA many times before as consultation fees have remained stagnant for the last two decades," said the body's president Datuk Dr Kalwinder Singh Khaira in a statement on Wednesday (Nov 13).

He said the association was against the government's proposal for private clinics to display medicine prices, saying it would erode clinics' function as a healthcare provider and make price comparison a priority.

"Implementing price transparency in GP clinics by requiring the display of every medication's price is not a practical approach," said Dr Kalwinder.

"GP clinics provide professional healthcare services, not retail transactions and displaying a full list of medication prices at the counter would be administratively burdensome and significantly increase operating costs.

MMA said while it supports the goal of improving patient access to cost information the policy could have serious, unintended consequences for GPs, who play a critical role in providing primary care services across Malaysia.

"With over 12,000 GP clinics nationwide, it is crucial that policies that support these community healthcare providers, such as regulation of the third party administrators be immediately implemented," added Dr Kalwinder.