

# **MMA voices concern over new shift system for public healthcare workers**

By [Hakim Mahari](#) - January 15, 2025 @ 9:28pm



*The Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) has voiced concerns that the pilot implementation of a new shift system for public healthcare workers will exacerbate existing manpower shortages, leaving doctors overburdened and risk the quality of patient care. - NSTP/EIZAIRI SHAMSUDIN*

**KUALA LUMPUR:** The Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) has voiced concerns that the pilot implementation of a new shift system for public healthcare workers will exacerbate existing manpower shortages, leaving doctors overburdened and risk the quality of patient care.

Its president Datuk Dr Kalwinder Singh Khaira said that while the system aims to reduce working hours and improve conditions, the current workforce is insufficient to meet the demands of the new arrangement.

"At present, the distribution of our healthcare workforce is struggling to cope with the high workloads.

"Reducing work hours without addressing manpower shortages will impact inpatient care, clinics, and other hospital services," he said in a statement today.

Dr Kalwinder also said that the system, known as 'Waktu Bekerja Berlainan' (WBB) could lead to income losses for medical officers and specialists.

Under the new system, weekday on-call allowances will not apply, and graveyard shifts will be treated as regular working hours within the 45-hour workweek.

"Doctors on WBB shifts will only receive increased on-call allowances for active calls on weekends and public holidays.

"However, there is no allowance for working beyond 5pm on weekdays. This leaves doctors facing a significant reduction in their take-home pay," he said.

The MMA has urged the Health Ministry to address these concerns and engage with clinicians and other stakeholders to ensure the system is implemented fairly.

Dr Kalwinder also called for an immediate increase in on-call allowances across all public healthcare facilities, regardless of the shift system, noting that the current allowance has not been revised in over a decade.

"The on-call allowance compensates medical officers and specialists for their dedication and sacrifices in delivering 24-hour healthcare services.

"Leaving hospitals and departments unable to implement this due to manpower shortages will further demoralise an already overworked workforce," he said.

He added that while doctors had been anticipating improved conditions following the Budget 2025 announcement of an allowance increase to RM55–RM65, the new shift system has left many feeling disappointed and upset.

The WBB pilot system will cap shift hours at 18 hours for doctors and dentists at selected government healthcare facilities.

However, the MMA cautioned that meaningful reform must begin with resolving manpower issues to ensure the sustainability of the healthcare system and the welfare of its workers.