

## MMA Welcomes Greater Operational Autonomy for MOH — MMA

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Empowering the MOH to manage and deploy its approved positions will enable manpower decisions to be made more efficiently and closer to where health care services are delivered.



*Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) president Dr R. Arasu speaks at MMA's Annual Banquet in Penang on September 13, 2025. Photo from Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad's Facebook page.*

The Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) welcomes the government's decision to grant the Ministry of Health (MOH) greater operational autonomy in managing, organising and deploying its approved workforce establishment.

This is an important and timely step towards strengthening health care workforce planning.

MMA also commends the leadership of Health Minister Dzulkefly Ahmad, health secretary-general Hasnol Zam Zam Ahmad, and health director-general Dr

Mahathir Abd Wahab for their commitment in driving these reforms. The close collaboration between the MOH, the Public Service Department (JPA), the Ministry of Finance (MOF), and the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) reflects the whole-of-government approach that is essential to addressing Malaysia's long-term health care workforce challenges.

MMA has consistently advocated for the MOH to be given greater flexibility in managing its health care workforce based on service needs. Empowering the MOH to manage and deploy its approved positions will enable manpower decisions to be made more efficiently and closer to where health care services are delivered.

MMA also welcomes the offering of permanent appointments to 4,500 contract medical officers, the establishment of the MOH-JPA Workforce Management Task Force, closer collaboration with the MOHE on long-term workforce planning, and the introduction of relocation benefits for eligible medical officers.

These are positive steps towards strengthening Malaysia's health care workforce. At the same time, MMA emphasises that the success of any policy depends on its implementation.

While the revised ePlacement mechanism is a practical administrative improvement, clear operational guidelines and consistent implementation across all levels will be essential to ensure eligible medical officers receive their relocation entitlements in a timely manner and in accordance with the prevailing financial regulations.

However, strengthening the health care workforce is not simply about creating more permanent positions. The challenge is ensuring the right health care

professionals at the right place, and at the right time, supported by clearer career pathways, equitable deployment, opportunities for postgraduate training and policies that encourage long-term retention within the public health care system.

With greater operational autonomy also comes greater responsibility. MMA believes this should be accompanied by a comprehensive health care workforce dashboard to enhance transparency and supported by evidence-based workforce planning.

Greater transparency will strengthen public confidence, facilitate better workforce planning and enable more timely interventions to address health care workforce challenges.

While this announcement marks an important milestone, it should also be viewed as the beginning of broader health care workforce reforms. In the longer term, MMA continues to support the establishment of an independent Health Service Commission as the most sustainable structural solution to enable health care workforce planning, career development and human resource management, to be coordinated under a dedicated framework that is responsive to the unique needs of Malaysia's health care system.

MMA remains committed to working closely with the MOH and other relevant stakeholders to ensure these reforms translate into a stronger, more responsive and sustainable health care system for the benefit of all Malaysians.

- *This statement was issued by MMA president Dr R. Arasu.*

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