

Thorough probe into doctor's death

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Dzulkefly

KOTA KINABALU (Sept 16): The Health Ministry will investigate the death of a doctor in Lahad Datu thoroughly following claims that she was a victim of bullying.

Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad reaffirmed his stance against workplace bullying.

“I have had zero tolerance towards bullying since 2018 and shall remain steadfast on this policy (with a few cases in hand),” he said in a post on X on Monday.

“All Health Ministry staff deserve a safe and just working environment,” he added.

It was reported that the specialist at the Lahad Datu hospital was found dead at her residence on Aug 29, with her death believed to be linked to incidents of workplace bullying.

Police have ruled out foul play in the death and classified it as a sudden death report.

Meanwhile, the Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) has also called for a full investigation into the incident.

In a statement, MMA President Datuk Dr Kalwinder Singh Khaira expressed deep sorrow over the doctor's passing and extended condolences to her family, friends and colleagues.

“This tragic loss underscores serious concerns about the mental health and well-being of doctors within the public healthcare system. We strongly urge the Ministry of Health and the Sabah State Health Department to expedite a thorough investigation.

“We also respectfully ask the public to refrain from speculation, allowing the proper processes to take place,” he said.

The MMA highlighted that the medical community is closely monitoring the situation and urged for a swift and transparent response from the authorities.

Dr Kalwinder reiterated MMA’s commitment to improving the mental health, welfare and working conditions of all healthcare professionals, ensuring a safe and supportive working environment.

Healthcare workers seeking assistance are encouraged to reach out to the MMA’s Helpdoc platform via helpdoc@mma.org.my.

On Sunday, Lahad Datu police chief Assistant Commissioner Dzulbaharin Ismail said investigation revealed there was no foul play involved in the death of the specialist doctor at the moment.

He said police were aware of claims on social media by the deceased’s family that the woman had taken her life because she was a victim of bullying.

“However, we have not ascertained why the incident happened. We are still waiting for a report from the Chemistry Department, after which we will forward the case to the coroner for the next course of action,” he added.

Dzulbaharin said the body of the woman, in her 30s, was found on August 30 and a report was lodged the same day.

Earlier, the deceased’s brother had claimed on Facebook that his sister committed suicide after being allegedly bullied by a senior colleague.

He said his sister had reported for duty at the Lahad Datu hospital in February of this year and had become the head of a department there.

But he said they were shocked when the hospital informed the family that his sister had died at her rented house on August 29.

The family member had alleged that the senior had given his sister additional work despite her busy schedule.

Sabah health director Datuk Dr Asits Sanna said the state Health Department would issue a statement soon after approval by the Health Ministry.