

## Allowance review for specialist nurses urgent, says Malaysian Medical Association

By Churchill Edward on April 18, 2026, Saturday at 7:00 AM Sarawak



*MMA has urged an urgent review of the RM100 monthly post-basic allowance for specialist nurses, saying it no longer reflects their workload, rising costs and critical role in Malaysia's healthcare system. – Bernama photo*

**KUCHING (April 18):** The Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) has called for an urgent review of the long-standing RM100 monthly post-basic allowance for specialist nurses, describing it as a test of national leadership and commitment to the healthcare system.

MMA president Datuk Dr Thirunavukarasu Rajoo said the allowance for highly trained nurses in critical care areas had remained unchanged for 17 years despite increasing responsibilities and rising living costs.

He hailed these nurses, serving in intensive care units (ICU), emergency and trauma departments, dialysis centres, oncology wards and neonatal care units, as 'essential to the effective functioning of hospitals'.

"Without them, ICU beds are not usable, surgeries cannot proceed safely and dialysis services cannot continue. This is no longer just a matter of fairness. It is a matter of system integrity," he said in a statement.

According to the MMA, Malaysia is currently facing a nursing vacancy rate of nearly 18 per cent in the public healthcare system, with more than 14,700 positions unfilled out of 84,000 as at September last year.

"Shortages are particularly critical among post-basic nurses in specialised fields requiring advanced training and experience."

In this regard, Dr Thirunavukarasu warned that continued attrition of experienced nurses from the public sector would result in a loss of expertise that could take years to rebuild, further straining the healthcare system.

"Most nurses are women balancing demanding shift work with family responsibilities, while contributing to serve with dedication," he added.

While acknowledging that remuneration structures fall under the Public Service Department and the Ministry of Finance, he said the matter would ultimately require a decision at the highest level.

"At this stage, it is no longer about process or timing within a budget cycle. It is about whether a decision is made," he said.

The MMA is calling for the allowance to be increased to a minimum of RM500 per month, along with a structured mechanism for periodic review.

"This does not require another study. It requires resolve. Our nurses have stood by Malaysians in our most vulnerable moments.

"The question now is whether national leadership will stand by them," said Dr Thirunavukarasu, whose comments were made in response to the Malayan Nurses Union's call for the Health Ministry to review the RM100 allowance, which had remained unchanged for 17 years.