

On-call allowances for doctors should be increased immediately, says MMA

By [Qistina Sallehuddin](#) - December 19, 2023 @ 1:36pm



Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) president Dr Azizan Abdul Aziz said the government must also take into consideration multiple factors, including inflation in expediting the increase of on-call allowances given during the last review in 2012. - NSTP file pic

KUALA LUMPUR: The much-delayed increase in the on-call allowances for medical officers should be carried out immediately without having to wait another decade.

Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) president Dr Azizan Abdul Aziz said the government must also take into consideration multiple factors, including inflation in expediting the increase of on-call allowances given during the last review in 2012.

"A decade is a long time for an increase in the on-call allowances. The MMA (previously) proposed the rate to be increased to at least RM25, which is a fair ask.

"Hence, we believe that it is only fair that the on-call rate be increased immediately as a review of the rate has been long overdue. Inflation also needs to be taken into consideration (to increase the allowances immediately)," she told the New Straits Times.

In February this year, MMA had suggested a 178 per cent increase in the on-call claims for doctors on weekends during a town hall session with former health minister Dr Zaliha Mustafa.

The proposal aimed to increase the rate of on-call allowances to RM25 per hour from the current RM9.16.

The Health Ministry in November, however, announced that it would maintain the current on-call allowances for doctors as it was considered sufficient due to other existing allowances provided.

This includes RM750 per month for critical services incentive; specialist incentive payment (RM2,200 to RM3,100 a month, depending on grade); and allowance for medical officers on duty after office hours at health clinics and hospital emergency departments (RM80 per hour).

The ministry also said that the government's current priority is to address allowance rates for service schemes that receive less than RM100 per month.

However, the Health Ministry last week announced that it was committed to examining the issue of on-call allowances for doctors.

Its Deputy Minister Datuk Lukanisman Awang Sauni said following several town hall sessions conducted by the ministry with medical officers, various suggestions have been presented to the Public Services Department (PSD) for the increase in on-call allowances. (reference: <https://www.nst.com.my/news/nation/2023/12/990001/health-ministry-vows-e...>)

The final decision on the matter, however, has yet to be reached despite ongoing efforts carried out by the ministry.

Following this, Dr Azizan lauded the announcement and said public health workers should be remunerated for their sacrifices in maintaining patient priorities at the expense of their work-life balance.

MMA had in press statement dated 4th November, mentioned that not all public healthcare doctors are entitled to the mentioned allowances, with eligibility depending on the doctor's position and rank.

"Healthcare spending should also be seen as an investment for the future and it takes years to train our healthcare professionals.

"The tasks they perform and the high level of accountability in dealing with life and death situations must be taken into account.

"Public healthcare workers also sacrifice their work-life balance to put patients' needs first and they should be fairly remunerated.

"Hence, we are pleased to hear that the minister has acknowledged that the on-call rate is indeed low and we welcome the ministry to look into the issue now."