

MMA calls for tougher enforcement after repeat illegal clinic discoveries

By Kalbana Perimbanayagam
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KUALA LUMPUR: The Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) has called for tougher enforcement after the latest discovery of suspected illegal clinics and seizure of unregistered medicines and medical equipment.

"What is particularly worrying is that this comes only months after similar illegal clinics were uncovered earlier this year,"

MMA president Dr L. Sivanaesan said in a statement.

He said the use of unregistered medicines, injections, antibiotics and medical equipment by unqualified or unregistered individuals posed a serious risk to patients and public health. It said inappropriate use of antibiotics could also contribute to antimicrobial resistance.

Healthcare must be provided by qualified and registered professionals at premises registered with the relevant authorities, using only approved medicines and medical equipment in treating patients, Dr Sivanaesan said.

The association called for tougher, sustained and intelligence-led enforcement, including coordinated inspections of suspected premises and regular follow-up inspections at locations previously found to be operating illegally.

Dr Sivanaesan said enforcement must also follow the supply chain, including how unregistered medicines are brought into the country and those who knowingly facilitate their distribution. It also called for stricter checks at the country's entry points to prevent unregistered medicines from entering Malaysia.

MMA said stronger action was needed not only against those operating illegal clinics, but also against the networks supplying and facilitating the unlawful activities.

Dr Sivanaesan said the government should also address healthcare access challenges

faced by undocumented migrants, as fear of coming into contact with enforcement authorities might discourage some from seeking care at registered healthcare facilities, leaving them vulnerable to illegal providers.

MMA urged the public not to compromise their health to save a small amount of money, saying treatment from unqualified individuals or illegal clinics might appear cheaper but could result in serious health and financial consequences.

In June, the Health Ministry said it would step up enforcement against unlicensed healthcare premises, including those offering aesthetic medical services, following a rise in complaints.

The ministry said it had received more than 1,020 complaints about unlicensed medical facilities since 2021, with the number increasing each year.

"The recurrence raises questions about whether enforcement is sufficiently sustained to prevent such operations from simply resurfacing elsewhere," Dr Sivanaesan said.