

MMA urges MOH to speed up reforms in healthcare system

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MMA president Dr Muruga Raj Rajathurai said some of the immediate reworking should include improving the work environment and the work-life balance of healthcare workers. - NSTP/EFFENDY RASHID

KUALA LUMPUR: The Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) has urged the Health Ministry (MOH) to implement improvements that do not require long administrative processes and additional funding to speed up reforms in the healthcare system.

MMA president Dr Muruga Raj Rajathurai said some of the immediate reworking should include improving the work environment and the work-life balance of healthcare workers.

He was responding to findings of a survey by health portal, CodeBlue, which highlighted that up to 95 per cent of 1,652 healthcare workers, consisting of government doctors and nurses, felt that the country's public health system is in crisis, driving 73 per cent of them to consider quitting their jobs.

The 73 per cent of respondents who thought of resigning from the public health sector were government doctors (across all seniority), pharmacy officers, dental officers, nurses, assistant medical officers and allied healthcare workers.

"We believe there is enough data to work with to make some immediate improvements.

"The MMA is deeply concerned as the dissatisfaction with the system can have a negative impact on the delivery of care therefore some immediate steps need to be taken.

"Human resources is the most important asset to any organisation therefore we urge MOH to prioritise the wellbeing of our healthcare workers as it seeks ways to improve the system," he said.

Dr Muruga Raj also expressed his concerns with the high percentage of dissatisfaction towards the system as it could impose a negative impact on the delivery of care for patients.

"If this many are thinking of quitting, we are concerned as to how long more can they endure the frustration while carrying out their duties.

"Will the Health ministry's planned reforms take place before they break down or leave for better opportunities?

"The Health minister has been working hard and has shown a strong commitment towards healthcare reforms. However, some of the improvements have to be fast-tracked," he said.

He added that data on bed utilisation and distribution of housemen, medical officers,, specialists, nurses, assistant medical officers, pharmacists and allied healthcare workers should immediately be used to address the irregularities in distribution of manpower.

The MMA, Dr Muruga said, hoped that the government would prepare a more meaningful budget for health with emphasis on increasing and enhancing healthcare human resources

"We believe the Prime Minister who is a reformist himself understands the importance of a resilient healthcare system and therefore we hope that the budget for health will be reflective of the government's commitment towards the much needed healthcare reforms," he said.