

Medical association urges council to resolve practising certificate delays

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MMA president Datuk Dr Thirunavukarasu Rajoo said many affected doctors had fully complied with all statutory requirements within the stipulated timeline. - NSTP/AIZUDDIN SAAD

KUALA LUMPUR: The Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) has urged the Malaysian Medical Council (MMC) to provide immediate assurance to doctors who submitted all required documents on time that they can continue practising without delay and receive their certificates by the end of January.

The call comes amid ongoing delays in the issuance of Annual Practising Certificates (APCs) for 2026, which has left tens of thousands of registered medical practitioners, particularly those in private practice, in a state of legal and professional uncertainty.

MMA president Datuk Dr Thirunavukarasu Rajoo said many affected doctors had fully complied with all statutory requirements within the stipulated timeline.

"This delay carries serious legal implications. Under Section 20(1) of the Medical Act 1971, practising medicine without a valid APC constitutes an offence, regardless of whether the practitioner has fulfilled all renewal requirements.

"For private general practitioners, a valid APC is a legal prerequisite to consult, prescribe, and practise.

"For private specialists, hospitals and medical institutions are compelled to insist on a valid APC due to the high medico-legal exposure, including vicarious liability, where institutions may be held legally responsible if an unlicensed doctor practises within their facilities," he said in a statement today.

He added that under the act, the MMC is statutorily responsible for the registration and regulation of medical practice in Malaysia. While administrative functions may be carried out by the secretariat, oversight and accountability rest squarely with the MMC Council.

"The council's role is not only to enforce compliance, but also to guide the profession and safeguard patients by ensuring regulatory processes function efficiently and fairly.

"As such, a clear public statement and an interim letter from the council would protect

compliant doctors, reassure healthcare institutions, and uphold patient safety," he said.

He said that the delay also extends beyond legal risk, particularly for those in private practice, as the inability to practise directly affects their livelihood.

"This situation is particularly untenable when compliant practitioners are rendered 'unlicensed' purely due to administrative delay.

"It undermines professional morale, disrupts healthcare delivery, and risks eroding public confidence in medical regulation," he said.

He added that the MMA is also ready to engage constructively with the MMC and the Health Ministry to resolve the current backlog and ensure that APC issuance processes are modernised, predictable, and fit for purpose.