



Doctors' body slams directive on anaesthesia, inpatient classification

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MMA president Dr R Thirunavukarasu says the recent circular from a third-party administrator was especially concerning as it was signed by a doctor.



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PETALING JAYA: The Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) has expressed grave concern over a circular by third-party administrators (TPAs) directing healthcare providers on the choice of anaesthesia and the classification of certain procedures as daycare or inpatient.

In a statement, MMA president Dr R Thirunavukarasu said such directives amounted to interference in clinical autonomy and were a clear breach of medical ethics.

Thirunavukarasu's statement comes less than a week after he called on the

government to [regulate](#) TPAs and managed care organisations after a TPA ordered panel clinics to restrict employees to generic medicines for chronic illnesses.

“Decisions on anaesthesia and admission status must always be made by the treating doctors based on the patient’s needs and safety, not financial or administrative considerations,” said Thirunavukarasu.

“(The public’s) trust in healthcare is at stake ... The duty of care must remain clear: patients first, always.”

Thirunavukarasu added that the circular was a matter of concern as it was signed by a doctor. He reminded doctors that they risk breaching their professional duties and placing themselves in positions of conflict of interest by endorsing such actions.

He said no doctor should lend their name or authority to policies that compromise patient safety or clinical independence.

Thirunavukarasu also urged the health ministry to regulate TPAs and managed care organisations, referring to the health

ministry’s managed care guidelines where such organisations are prohibited from interfering in treatment decisions.

“The health ministry cannot remain silent while commercial interests intrude into clinical care,” he said.

Earlier today, health news portal CodeBlue reported that MediExpress Sdn Bhd had ordered panel hospitals to prioritise local anaesthesia (LA) over general anaesthesia (GA) for procedures and surgeries, unless there are “clear clinical contraindications”.

It also reported that the TPA reminded panel hospitals that certain procedures could be performed as daycare procedures without requiring overnight admission, saying “appropriate justification” must be provided for guarantee letter (GL) approval.

This followed a similar incident last week where CodeBlue reported that MiCare Sdn Bhd, a TPA owned by Hong Kong-based Zuellig Group, had directed panel healthcare providers to limit Hong Leong Bank employees to generic versions of medicines for chronic conditions.