

Group: There are laws governing pharmacists

NATION

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PETALING JAYA: The Malaysian Pharmaceutical Society has debunked accusations by the Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) that pharmacists and pharmacies are not regulated.

It's president Amrahi Buang said pharmacists and pharmacies are licensed and regulated by the Health Ministry.

"Like MMA, the society oversees the registration of pharmacists under the Registration of Pharmacists Act 1951 and the issuing of their annual practising licence, enabling them to dispense medications.

"Pharmacists are also licensed under the Poison Act 1952 to store, handle and dispense controlled medicines."

Aside from that, he said, pharmacies are governed under the Dangerous Drugs Act 1952, the Sales of Drug Act and Medicines (Advertisement and Sales) Act 1956.

"The Private Healthcare Facilities and Services Act (PHFSA) was introduced in 1998 to regulate the medical fraternity while the laws and regulations to govern the pharmacists and pharmacies had been enforced in the country since the 50's," said Amrahi.

Yesterday, The Star reported that many companies are turning to pharmacies to get long-term medication for their staff to reduce the operation cost.

MMA president Dr N. Ganabaskaran had said that it is the patient's right to get their medicine directly from the pharmacy as long as they follow the existing law on prescription and dispensing of drugs.

However, he said, clinics are stringently regulated under PHFSA to protect the patients while pharmacy outlets are not regulated.

Amrahi said the society has always been supportive of MMA, especially in getting a better fee structure for private general practitioners.

He said pharmacies are not trying to take the business away from the doctors but to allow the consumers to have a better option when buying their prescribed medications, especially for long term usage.

It was reported that companies and individuals could save as much as 40% by buying direct from independent pharmacies.

The move, which is trending among many local companies, helps them save millions of ringgit yearly in staff medical benefits.

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