

MMA urges Health Ministry to investigate RM20 medical examination for e-hailing drivers

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PETALING JAYA: The Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) has urged the Health Ministry to investigate the type of medical examinations being offered to e-hailing drivers for only RM20.

MMA president Dr N. Ganabaskaran said it was impossible for general practitioners (GPs) to conduct a proper medical examination for commercial vehicle drivers at RM20.

"We are curious to know what kind of medical examination is being offered at such a low price. Such price-cutting under the guise of corporate social responsibility (CSR) is shameful, an utter disgrace to the medical fraternity and may compromise duty and quality of care.

"We wish to remind all concerned that the medical examinations are mandatory for the safety of the driver, their passengers and all road users," he said in a statement Sunday (Sept 29).

On Aug 20, the Road Transport Department (JPJ) issued a circular to the Health Ministry and MMA to fix a standard rate of RM80 for e-hailing drivers to do their medical examination. The check-up is needed for the application and renewal of the PSV licence.

However, Malaysia E-Hailing Drivers Association (Mehda) claimed that JPJ's decision to set the mandatory medical examination fee for e-hailing drivers at RM80 was not warranted as many clinics charge only RM20.

Mehda claimed that 135 panel clinics nationwide had agreed to the RM20 per person for its members taking the medical examination.

Dr Ganabaskaran said charging RM20 was perhaps a form of block discount that may amount to fee splitting, adding that it is unethical as the clinic and practitioner can be charged under Act 586 of the Private Healthcare Facilities and Services Act 1998.

He noted that the mandatory medical examinations for the application and renewal of public service vehicle (PSV) licence consists of consultation as well as physical examinations (vision, hearing, obstructive sleep apnea, neurology/musculoskeletal, cardio-vascular system, respiratory system, diabetes).

Come Oct 1, Dr Ganabaskaran said a new format of a more detailed examination proposed by JPJ would require doctors to spend longer time for each driver to be examined.

He said that these medical examinations were important as commercial vehicle drivers spent more time on the road compared to others and certain medical conditions such as diabetes can cause drowsiness and affect concentration.

"GPs shoulder a heavy responsibility in certifying a person medically fit and there are legal implications if there are errors made by a GP in the medical examination process," he said.

Dr Ganabaskaran clarified that the RM80 examination was not "pulled out of thin air", adding that the cost of the medical examination was proposed at RM120 initially but was lowered to take into consideration the financial status of e-hailing drivers.

"The health of all commercial vehicle drivers must be taken seriously with a detailed medical examination carried out to ensure all drivers are medically fit to provide their services as the lives of passengers are put in their hands the minute a passenger steps into their vehicle.

"A proper detailed medical examination must be insisted upon by the authorities with no compromise on the standard and quality of healthcare services provided by GPs who conduct these medical check-ups," he said.

TAGS / KEYWORDS:

Malaysian Medical Association , Health Ministry , Medical Examinations , E-Hailing Drivers