

# 'Cheap medical test is unethical'

## NATION

Monday, 30 Sep 2019

By **ASHLEY TANG**

PETALING JAYA: The Malaysian Medical Association wants the Health Ministry to investigate claims that doctors are providing medical exams for e-hailing drivers at just RM20, calling the fee "impossible". It was impossible for general practitioners (GPs) to conduct a proper medical examination for these drivers at such a cost, said MMA president Dr N. Ganabaskaran.

"We are curious to know what kind of medical examination is being offered at such a low price.

"Such practices of price undercutting under the guise of corporate social responsibility 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 yesterday.

On Aug 20, the Road Transport Department (JPJ) issued a circular to the 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 public service vehicle (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 only charged RM20.

Mehda claimed that 135 panel clinics nationwide had agreed to a charge of RM20 per person for the medical examination.

Ganabaskaran said charging RM20 was perhaps a form of block discount that might amount to fee splitting, adding it was unethical as the clinic and practitioner could be charged under the Private Healthcare Facilities and Services Act. He noted that the mandatory medical examinations for the application and renewal of the PSV licence consisted of consultation as well as physical examination which includes vision, hearing, obstructive sleep apnea, neurology/musculoskeletal, cardio vascular system, respiratory system and diabetes.

Come Oct 1, Ganabaskaran said a new format of a more detailed examination proposed by JPJ would require doctors to spend a 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 could 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.

Ganabaskaran said 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.

Copyright © 1995-2020 Star Media Group Berhad (10894D)  
Best viewed on Chrome browsers.