

# Online petition gathers 82,000 signatures

---

**NATION** 

Friday, 27 Dec 2019

**PETALING JAYA:** An online petition by the Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) against the government's decision to do away with the Critical Service Incentive Allowance for new appointments across the civil service starting next year has gathered more than 75,000 signatures in less than 48 hours.

Launched on Tuesday, the petition called for the reinstatement of the allowance to all healthcare professionals, namely nurses, medical assistants, pharmacists, dentists and doctors.

"While we support prudence and ensuring a leaner civil service, this should never come at the expense of the critical areas for the development of the country, namely health and education," said MMA vice-chairman Dr Vijay Ganasan on the online petition platform change.org.

He claimed that the decision would see a 15% pay cut for newly-graduated doctors, nurses, pharmacists and dentists joining the public sector next year.

"Why does the civil service seem to be targeting healthcare workers? We are the only professional scheme with contract juniors.

"We are now faced with a sharp reduction in our incentives. There seems to be an ever-increasing burden being placed on our juniors, and we from the association feel this is unfair," he said.

At press time, the petition had attracted over 82,000 signatures.

In a Dec 20 circular, the Public Service Department announced that the government will no longer give Critical Service Incentive Allowance to 33 professions joining the civil service next year.

Malaysian Pharmaceutical Association president Amrahi Buang called on the government to reconsider and delay implementing the decision until a discussion is held with all stakeholders.

"It seems that the circular was issued in a haste. We propose for it to be postponed and call for a discussion as soon as possible with all the relevant professional bodies.

"This is important to show sincerity, openness and transparency of the government in this matter," he said in a statement yesterday.

Malaysian Medics International chairman Dr Vikkineshwaran Siva Subramaniam said that although the allowance was never a permanent remuneration, the government should know that healthcare professionals also need to survive.

He pointed out that there would be a significant difference in how much a junior doctor will make after Jan 1, and the situation will see that medical doctors who are seniors will be earning less than their juniors, who are housemen. (refer to graphic)

“Due to the nobility of the profession, it has always been tricky discussing the concept of payment for the service provided by healthcare professionals. However, it is crucial to bear in mind that healthcare professionals such as doctors are also regular people with basic wants and needs and they too need money to survive,” he said, adding that the government should reinstate the allowance or consider increasing the basic salary for medical professionals in contract positions.

#### **Related stories:**

[An unkind cut](#)

[New medical grads see red over incentive cut](#)

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