

MMA: General practitioners should get allowance too

NATION 

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KUALA LUMPUR: The government's provision of a monthly critical allowance for public medical personnel until the end of the Covid-19 epidemic is welcome, but incentives should be given to the 7,000 private general practitioners (GPs) in the country too, says the Malaysian Medical Association (MMA).

Its president Dr N. Ganabaskaran said MMA believes that the RM400 allowance to be given to medical personnel was much-welcome news for frontliners in public healthcare.

"However, the 7,000 GPs in the country are also frontliners in our nation's healthcare.

"They are usually the first point of contact when a person is having flu symptoms. Some form of incentives would have been welcome," he said in a statement yesterday.

On Thursday, interim Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad unveiled a stimulus package worth RM20bil to help cushion the effects of the Covid-19 outbreak.

To thank civil servants who are frontliners in tackling the disease, the government will pay an allowance of RM400 a month to doctors and medical staff.

Dr Ganabaskaran said since news of the Covid-19 outbreak first emerged, GP clinics had been playing an important role in monitoring such cases.

"GP clinics had to purchase additional supplies of face masks, surgical gloves as well as other infectious disease control items.

"At least some form of tax incentives should have been considered."

However, he said it was reassuring that allocations in healthcare funds were made to manage the Covid-19 situation in the country.