

Conduct strict inspection on e-prescription practices

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While technology and digital healthcare solutions can enhance efficiency, they must be implemented responsibly. – Amirul Syafiq/theSun

THE MMA (Malaysian Medical Association) is urging the authorities to conduct thorough inspections and audits on all pharmacies utilising e-prescription services.

This is to ensure compliance with the Poisons Act and protect patient safety, especially in the dispensation of long-term medications.

The association has raised concerns over recent notifications from some third-party administrators, which have mandated a shift towards pharmacy-based dispensing of medications via e-prescriptions.

MMA is troubled by reports indicating that some patients are receiving medications without valid prescriptions from their treating doctors, a potential violation of the Poisons Act.

According to existing regulations, prescriptions should only be reissued for a limited period, typically up to two additional supplies.

However, MMA has identified instances where prescriptions for follow-up medications are being issued by online doctors who have never physically examined or treated the patient. This practice not only contravenes regulatory requirements but also undermines the principles of safe and effective patient care.

The proper management of non-communicable diseases (NCD) requires more than the dispensation of medication. It involves regular monitoring, clinical assessments and necessary adjustments to treatment as per established clinical guidelines.

The indiscriminate issuance of e-prescriptions without proper medical oversight poses significant risks, particularly for patients with chronic conditions such as diabetes, hypertension and cardiovascular diseases.

MMA is particularly concerned about the increasing prevalence of complications linked to poor NCD management, such as end-stage kidney disease, which has seen a worrying rise in recent years.

The lack of adequate supervision in long-term medication management may further escalate the burden of chronic diseases, leading to worsening patient outcomes and increased healthcare costs.

To address this issue, MMA urges the authorities to conduct stringent inspections and audits on all pharmacies utilising e-prescription services.

Strict enforcement by the authorities is essential to ensure that patient care is not compromised.

The association stresses that while technology and digital healthcare solutions can enhance efficiency, they must be implemented responsibly and in compliance with healthcare laws.

MMA calls for urgent action from the authorities to uphold the integrity of the nation's healthcare system.

MMA stands ready to engage with the relevant stakeholders, including the Health Ministry and regulatory bodies, to discuss measures that will strengthen patient safety in the digital healthcare landscape.

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