

Delay medicine price display policy until GP fees are reviewed, govt told

By [Qistina Sallehuddin](#) - February 22, 2025 @ 6:28pm



Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) president Datuk Dr Kalwinder Singh Khaira said while the association supports transparency in healthcare pricing, enforcing the policy without addressing the longstanding issue of GP consultation fees would threaten the sustainability of private primary care services, among other concerns. PIC COURTESY OF MMA

KUALA LUMPUR: The mandatory display of medicine prices at private general practitioner (GP) clinics should be postponed until private GP consultation fees are reviewed and gazetted.

Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) president Datuk Dr Kalwinder Singh Khaira said while the association supports transparency in healthcare pricing, enforcing the policy without addressing the longstanding issue of GP consultation fees would threaten the sustainability of private primary care services, among other concerns.

He also said prior to the proposed implementation of mandatory price displays, patients already had access to information on the cost of services and medications at private clinics upon request.

He added that displaying medicine prices could lead to more consumers purchasing prescription drugs from pharmacies or online retailers.

"We are deeply concerned about the lack of control over the widespread sale of prescription drugs without a doctor's prescription at pharmacies or online, an issue that the MMA has previously highlighted.

"All sales of prescription drugs, whether at pharmacies or online, should be strictly regulated, with audits conducted by the Health Ministry to ensure responsible dispensing.

"The sale of prescription drugs should be strictly enforced, requiring a doctor's prescription and proper records to document transactions.

"Hence, the MMA urges the government to delay implementing the medicine price display policy until issues with GP consultation fees are resolved and a system is in place to strictly regulate the sale of prescription drugs at pharmacies or online.

"We call on the government to reassess this policy in the interest of the people and to ensure that the healthcare system remains fair, sustainable and patient-centred," he said in a statement today.

In November last year, Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad announced that the government would make it mandatory for private healthcare facilities to [display medication prices](#) to enhance transparency starting in 2025.

Dzulkefly said the initiative would be implemented under the Price Control and Anti-Profiteering Act 2011.

He added that through such measures, medication charges in insurance claims can be reviewed to ensure that prices do not exceed those displayed, preventing arbitrary price increases for medications.

Dr Kalwinder added that private GP clinics have long served as the first point of access to healthcare for Malaysians, including those in the B40 and M40 income groups.

These clinics, he said, play a crucial role in providing accessible, high-quality care while helping to reduce congestion at government hospitals.

He also said due to a surge in contract doctors leaving government service to enter private practice, Malaysia has seen an oversupply of GP clinics, with 4,000 new clinics opened in recent years, leading to intense competition and financial strain.

"A 2017 MMA study found that 30 per cent of clinics operate at a loss, 30 per cent barely break even, 30 per cent survive but do not grow and only 10 per cent are in good financial health.

"With 60 per cent of GP clinics under financial pressure, any additional regulatory burden without economic safeguards will force more clinics to shut down, ultimately affecting the public who rely on affordable and accessible GP services," he said.

He added that unlike businesses offering only one aspect of healthcare services, GPs provide holistic patient care, including consultation, diagnosis, treatment and follow-up.

Following this, he said patients unable to afford private GP services would turn to government hospitals, leading to longer waiting times and worsening congestion.

"The private GP consultation fees have not been reviewed for over 30 years, despite rising operational costs—including rent,

salaries and regulatory compliance.

"Many clinics rely on cross-subsidisation from medicine dispensing revenue to keep services affordable.

"Implementing the price display policy without revising consultation fees will force clinics to either increase charges or reduce service quality.

"If more private GP clinics close, patients will turn to government hospitals, leading to longer waiting times and worsening congestion.

"This contradicts the government's goal of strengthening primary healthcare services to ease the burden on public hospitals," he said.