

MMA, Hartal Doktor Kontrak welcome decision to cancel staggered working hours pilot project

By [Luqman Hakim](#) - January 25, 2025 @ 6:15pm



The Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) and Hartal Doktor Kontrak welcomed the government's decision to cancel the staggered working hours (WBB) pilot project pending further studies of its impact on healthcare services and doctors. - NSTP/EIZAIRI SHAMSU

KUALA LUMPUR: The Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) and Hartal Doktor Kontrak welcomed the government's decision to cancel the staggered working hours (WBB) pilot project pending further studies of its impact on healthcare services and doctors.

MMA president Datuk Dr Kalwinder Singh Khaira said the move was a step in the right direction, highlighting the association's previous concerns about the proposed staggered working hours.

"This is the appropriate decision, considering the numerous concerns raised by MMA, other doctors, and medical groups about its potential impact on both affected doctors and public healthcare services," he said in a statement today.

Dr Kalwinder also expressed the association's full support for the Health Ministry's establishment of a dedicated task force to address healthcare delivery and improve work-hour scheduling.

He commended the appointment of former Health director-general Tan Sri Datuk Dr Abu Bakar Suleiman to head the task force.

"His vast experience will undoubtedly contribute significantly to achieving its intended objectives,"

Kalwinder also thanked the health minister and his team for engaging with the MMA on Thursday to discuss key issues, including the WBB, on-call allowances, and other challenges faced by public sector doctors.

"We remain committed to supporting the ministry in its efforts to enhance healthcare delivery and look forward to continued collaboration.

"We also look forward to engaging with the newly set up task force as MMA has always espoused the importance and need for stakeholder engagement right from the initial stages of any policy planning. We trust this approach will be adopted going forward."

Meanwhile, Hartal Doktor Kontrak, a group advocating for contract doctors' rights, also commended the government for shelving the initiative.

"This decision should serve as a lesson to the country's leadership and ministries to truly listen to voices from the grassroots.

"The grassroots are what strengthen the tall, blossoming trees. They are the foundation and the roots of towering trees," the group said in a statement.

The group reaffirmed its commitment to providing checks and balances for Health Ministry policies and highlighted unresolved issues such as the promised establishment of a Health Reform Commission.

"We will continue to advocate for the welfare and sustainability of our medical fraternity. At the same time, those who initially proposed this policy must be held accountable for their decisions," it added.

The WBB pilot project, which proposed staggered working hours for public sector doctors, was met with criticism from healthcare professionals, who warned of potential disruptions to patient care and increased strain on an already burdened healthcare system.

The Health Ministry announced the project's cancellation on Friday, assuring that any future initiatives would involve comprehensive studies and consultations with all stakeholders.

Bernama reported Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad saying the decision to cancel the staggered working hours system was made after careful consideration of all relevant factors.

"To facilitate this, the Ministry of Health (MOH) has formed a special committee, which will be chaired by former Director-General of Health, Tan Sri Abu Bakar Suleiman," he said in a statement.

Dzulkefly said the committee's terms of reference are related to enhancing the delivery of healthcare services to the public and the scheduling of working hours.

"MOH will continue its efforts to create a safe and equitable working environment for all, especially healthcare workers," he said.