

## MMA urges govt to resolve parallel pathway issue at tomorrow's cabinet meeting

By **Fuad Nizam** - May 28, 2024 @ 11:15pm



*Malaysian Medical Association president Dr Azizan Abdul Aziz wants the cabinet to resolve the issue surrounding the parallel pathway programme and the lack of cardiothoracic surgeons in the country in its meeting tomorrow.*

KUALA LUMPUR: The Malaysian Medical Association has urged the cabinet to resolve the issue surrounding the parallel pathway programme in its meeting tomorrow.

MMA president Dr Azizan Abdul Aziz, in thanking Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim for his statement that the cabinet would [discuss the issue](#) surrounding the programme at Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM), said this was as the country had a critical lack of cardiothoracic surgeons.

"We wish to thank the Prime Minister for taking this step towards addressing the issue and look forward to a positive outcome as the matter should not be prolonged any further given that the country is in dire need of more specialists.

"It has been reported that thousands are on the waiting list for life-saving cardiothoracic procedures at public healthcare facilities but at present, there are only 14 cardiothoracic surgeons serving in the public healthcare system throughout the country," she said.

Dr Azizan said the onus was on the Malaysian Medical Council (MMC) to recognise the Fellowship of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh (FRCS Ed) cardiothoracic surgery programme.

She said that there is no issue with the FRCS Ed cardiothoracic surgery programme's quality of training as the programme is well structured.

"This exit examination has the same standards and format as the examination conducted in the UK and is regulated by the UK General Medical Council (GMC)."

Dr Azizan also said that the Malaysian Board of Cardiothoracic Surgery (MBCTS) will only award the Certificate of Completion of Training (CCT) to those who completed training and have passed the necessary examinations.

"All we need now is for MMC to recognise the programme. The MMC had announced its setting up of a task force to resolve the issue on March 26 but up to now, there has been no update.

"We once again wish to bring to the government's attention that data from the past obtained from the National Specialist Register (NSR) itself shows that the FRCS Ed qualification was indeed recognised.

"Furthermore, there are several Malaysian specialists with this qualification registered with the NSR. If indeed the qualification was previously recognised by the MMC, why is it an issue recognising it now?"

Dr Azizan said the MMC should explain why the recognition in 2014 as seen on the NSR website was mysteriously removed.

Previously, several quarters, including MMA, had called for UiTM to open its cardiothoracic surgery postgraduate programme to non-Bumiputera trainees due to the shortage of specialists in the field.

The proposal, however, was opposed by UiTM student's council and several quarters who stressed that the university was established to protect the interests of Malay and Bumiputera students.

UiTM is believed to be the only university in the country that offers a parallel pathway training programme via a collaboration with the National Heart Institute.