



Resolve parallel pathway programme issue at Cabinet meeting tomorrow, govt told

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The Malaysian Medical Association says the matter should not be prolonged any further.



MMA president Dr Azizan Abdul Aziz said there are only 14 cardiothoracic surgeons serving in the public healthcare system nationwide but thousands of patients are on waiting lists.

PETALING JAYA: The Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) has urged the government to urgently resolve the issues concerning the parallel pathway programme when the Cabinet discusses the matter at its meeting tomorrow.

Highlighting the urgency of the matter, MMA president Dr Azizan Abdul Aziz said there are only 14 cardiothoracic surgeons serving in the public healthcare system nationwide but thousands of patients are on waiting lists for life-saving cardiothoracic procedures.

“The matter should not be prolonged any further given that the country is in dire need of more specialists,” she said in a statement.

On Sunday, Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim revealed that the Cabinet would discuss issues on the parallel pathway programme on Wednesday.

MMA had previously called for Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM) to prioritise public health by temporarily opening its cardiothoracic surgery programme to non-Bumiputeras amid a shortage of specialists.

The call came amid the Malaysian Medical Council's (MMC) dispute with specialists from the parallel pathway programme, and medical genetics graduates over the recognition of their qualifications for inclusion in the National Specialist Register.

Commenting on MMC's non-recognition of the Fellowship of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh (FRCS Ed) cardiothoracic programme, Azizan said there should be no issue on its quality as the training provided is well structured.

Former health minister Dr S Subramaniam, in a [letter](#), said that the FRCS Ed programme is guided by training structures developed by the Malaysian Board of Cardiothoracic Surgery (MBCTS) in collaboration with the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh, while trainees have been trained in some of the largest cardiothoracic centres in the country, including the National Heart Institute (IJN), while being supervised by some of the country's leading cardiothoracic surgeons.

“Furthermore, on Sept 15, 2018, the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh, the College of Surgeons of Malaysia, the College of Surgeons of Hong Kong, Malaysian Association for Thoracic and Cardiovascular Surgery (MATCVS) and the Joint Committee of Specialist Training of Singapore signed a memorandum to conduct a quadripartite exit examination for the FRCS Ed cardiothoracic surgery programme” he said.

Meanwhile, Azizan also said that the exit examination has the same standards and format as the examination conducted in the UK and regulated by the UK General Medical Council (GMC).

“It should be noted that the MBCTS will only award the certificate of completion of training to those who successfully 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,” she said.