

## **Medical association welcomes long-overdue review of private clinic consultation fees**

BY CHURCHILL EDWARD ON MARCH 5, 2025, WEDNESDAY AT 9:58 PM **SARAWAK**



*Dr Kalwinder Singh says that while operational costs have soared, private GP fees have remained stagnant for over three decades.*

**KUCHING (March 5):** The Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) has welcomed the government's initiative to review private clinic consultation fees, calling it a long-overdue adjustment after more than 33 years.

MMA President Dato' Dr Kalwinder Singh Khaira said in a statement today that while operational costs have soared, private general practitioner (GP) fees have remained stagnant for over three decades.

"This has been an issue which MMA has been strongly advocating for. We also wish to thank the Health Minister and the Health Ministry for its decision to defer deliberations on Medicine Price Display until the private GP fees are increased and gazetted for implementation.

"It is important to note that the current RM10 to RM35 consultation fee range was originally proposed by MMA in 1992 before being incorporated into the 7th fee schedule of the Private Healthcare Facilities and Services Act (PHFSA) Act 586 in 2006," he said.

Despite every other product and service experiencing multiple price revisions over the years, private clinic consultation fees have remained unchanged since 1992, he pointed out.

Dr Kalwinder Singh stressed that many private clinics are struggling to stay afloat due to rising costs of staff salaries, rentals, utilities, and equipment, along with additional financial burdens imposed by various regulatory requirements.

The stagnant consultation fees, coupled with high operational costs, have forced many private clinics to shut down in recent years, he said.

“The call for this review by MMA and all GPs is not about imposing a sudden price hike but ensuring a fair and sustainable adjustment that reflects the reality of operating costs while maintaining affordability for patients,” he explained.

He said strengthening the private GP sector as the first point of care will also help reduce overall healthcare costs by improving patient referrals and minimising unnecessary hospital visits.

“As a point of comparison, the government had set the consultation fees for Medical Officers (MO) in private hospital emergency departments at between RM30 to RM125 in 2013.

“In 2015, MOH acknowledged that GP consultation fees should be aligned with this range, yet implementation was delayed due to non-technical reasons and never implemented,” said Dr Kalwinder Singh

During its recent engagement with the Health Minister and ministry officials, the MMA reiterated concerns over the stagnant consultation fee rates, he added.

The ministry has informed MMA that this time, it is working with the Department of Statistics Malaysia (DOSM) to conduct a simulation on the Consumer Price Index for the recommended private GP consultation fees.

“We (MMA) hope that the government, in its process of deciding on the quantum, will also look at the historical basis as mentioned above as well as take into account the fact that this will be the first adjustment after 33 long years.

“It must also take into account key factors such as the rising cost of operating a clinic, whilst ensuring patient’s access to affordable primary care services remains.

“A critical issue that must also be addressed is the role of Third-Party Administrators (TPAs), as 65 per cent of urban patients receive healthcare benefits through these corporate arrangements” he said.

He said many GPs are bound by TPA contracts that impose high administrative fees and fixed low consultation rates.

Delayed payments further strain the financial viability of GP clinics, he added.

Dr Kalwinder Singh expressed hope that the review would be completed soon and implemented in the coming months.

“MMA in its meeting with the Health Minister and the Health Ministry, has also asked that there be a mechanism for periodic fee adjustments to prevent prolonged delays in future revisions of the private GP fee schedule.

“Fees should not be subjected to political considerations but instead reviewed at regular intervals based on economic factors and inflation. A structured review every three years, with adjustments of around 10 per cent in line with yearly inflation of approximately three per cent, would ensure fairness and sustainability in the long term,” he said.

He urged the government to make a fair, data-driven decision that supports both patient care and the viability of private GP clinics.

Ensuring a well-functioning primary care system is key to strengthening Malaysia’s healthcare system as a whole, he added.

In Parliament yesterday, Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad confirmed that the ministry is collaborating with DOSM to conduct simulations and determine a suitable price range for private GP consultation fees.

He noted that consultation fees for private GPs have remained unchanged for almost two decades.

“The ministry is in the process of reviewing consultation fees for private general practitioners, as these rates have not been revised since 2006,” he said in a written reply to Datuk Seri Dr Wee Ka Siong (BN-Ayer Hitam).

Dr Dzulkefly added that the review would also take into account the impact of any fee adjustments on the Consumer Price Index.

Currently, consultation fees are regulated under the Seventh Schedule of the Private Healthcare Facilities and Services (Private Medical Clinics or Private Dental Clinics) Regulations 2006 under Act 586.