

Doctors' associations oppose use of price control law on healthcare sector

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Several doctors' associations in Malaysia have opposed the Health Ministry's decision to apply the Price Control and Anti-Profiteering Act 2011 (Act 723) to the private healthcare sector. - File pic

KUALA LUMPUR: Several doctors' associations in Malaysia have opposed the Health Ministry's decision to apply the Price Control and Anti-Profiteering Act 2011 (Act 723) to the private healthcare sector.

The move, intended to promote price transparency at private hospitals and clinics, has been criticised as unacceptable and unreasonable.

In a joint statement, the associations, including the Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) and the Medical Practitioners Coalition Association of Malaysia (MPCAM) and six other associations, argued that the application of Act 723 to healthcare facilities is inappropriate, as it is not designed for medical practice.

"The new policy by the Ministry of Health utilising the Price Control and Anti-Profiteering Act 2011 (Act 723) for the purpose of price transparency at private hospitals and clinics which brings the private healthcare sector under the ambit of two differing Acts is unacceptable and unreasonable."

The associations said that private healthcare providers are already subject to extensive regulation under the Private Healthcare Facilities and Services Act 1998 (Act 586), which governs medical practice in Malaysia.

"The manner of price display being requested of private clinics and other private healthcare facilities is burdensome and does not reflect patients' expectation. Furthermore, it is not applied similarly to other sectors already gazetted under Act 723. This is an overreach of authority and burdensome," the statement read.

They said that all matters concerning healthcare should fall under the jurisdiction of the Health Ministry and that any changes to healthcare policy should be made through the existing framework of Act 586.

"The Health Minister has the authority to introduce new regulations under Section 107 of Act 586 if deemed necessary to implement any new policy to enhance patients' rights," the statement added.