

Medical practitioner groups against proposed mandatory display of medicine prices

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[Sarawak](#)



The groups also pointed out that the notion that private clinics and facilities were against price transparency was incorrect and misleading. – AFP photo

KUCHING (April 7): Eight associations representing doctors and medical practitioners have expressed their opposition to the government’s proposal to enforce the mandatory display of medicine prices under the Price Control and Anti-Profiteering Act 2011 (Act 723).

The groups in a joint statement described the new policy by the Ministry of Health (MoH) in utilising 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, as “unacceptable and unreasonable.”

“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 threat of enforcement even though ‘delegated’ is real, but no discussions have ever been held concerning this,” they said.

The eight associations in the joint statement are the Malaysian Medical Association (MMA), Medical Practitioners Coalition Association of Malaysia (MPCAM), Academy of Family Physicians of Malaysia (AFPM), Federation of Private Medical Practitioners’ Associations, Malaysia (FPMPAM), PertubuhanDoktor-Doktor Islam Malaysia (PERDIM), Malaysian Association of Advancement of Functional & Interdisciplinary Medicine (MAAFIM), Association of Private Practitioners Sabah (APPS), and Society Of Private Medical Practitioners Sarawak (SPMPS).

The groups also pointed out that the notion that private clinics and facilities were against price transparency was incorrect and misleading.

“Patients have always had the right to know the prices charged for medications. They have always had the right to request for a prescription to obtain medications elsewhere if they feel the prices charged at the clinic is high.

“Patients have a right to choose which facility they want to go to including the option of going to a government facility if so desired,” they said, adding that the rights of patients are already enshrined under the Private Healthcare Facilities and Services Act 1998 (Act 586).

The associations, nevertheless, stressed that private medical practitioners were not against price transparency but that the implementation and enforcement must be fair and practical.

“Medicine price display requirements should not impose excessive administrative burdens that disrupt patient care. Regular monitoring and updating of medicine prices will increase operational costs and require additional manpower, which could affect service efficiency.

“Private healthcare facilities are not retail businesses and should not be regulated under any non-medical act or by any authority other than the MoH.

“Doctors are healthcare professionals who provide patient care, not retail operators selling medicines at the request of patients. Specific medicines are prescribed and dispensed only after consultation, examination and investigations are carried out,” they said.

They also noted that the medical profession and private healthcare facilities are already heavily regulated under Act 586—a specific law that governs healthcare practice in Malaysia.

The groups said all provisions controlling and regulating the private healthcare sector should come under one Act and especially so when an Act exists and is in force.

“All matters concerning the medical practice should come under the sole authority of its rightful ministry which is the MoH.

“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 groups called on the government to review this policy decision, stating that any policy should only be implemented after engagement with all stakeholders.