

## **Grateful For Junior Doctors' Permanent Positions, But Disappointed With Handling Of Placement Process — MMA**

By CodeBlue | 7 November 2024

“Many junior doctors who have served diligently are now questioning why some colleagues were offered permanent roles while others were not and placed on the reserve list. The absence of transparency has led to disappointment and frustration,” says MMA.



*Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) president Dr Kalwinder Singh Khaira.*

The Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) expresses its gratitude for the permanent positions recently awarded to junior doctors who applied for interim contract roles.

However, there is disappointment among some doctors with regard to how the placement process was conducted.

The lack of transparency on the criteria and technical issues which arose has led to frustration for some of the junior doctors.

A significant issue with the recent placements is the lack of clarity surrounding the criteria for the selection for permanent positions. Many junior doctors who have served diligently are now questioning why some colleagues were offered permanent roles, while others were not and placed on the reserve list.

The absence of transparency has led to disappointment and frustration among these doctors.

There has also been reports of system crashes and limited availability of state slots during the application process. From the feedback received, it was discovered that the placement system experienced crashes upon release, which prevented many applicants from accessing it.

By the time it was restored, certain states had already run out of slots, leaving junior doctors with no choice but to choose locations far from where they have been contributing effectively.

Many are willing to stay in places where they have already built experience and competency, but the lack of slots and system limitations eventually left them without options.

As such, the government should consider allowing doctors who are already trained in a particular discipline to remain in their current posts when they are willing to do so.

Input from Heads of Departments should be given strong consideration when it comes to transfer decisions. Relocating experienced junior doctors without consultation risks disrupting critical services and departmental needs and services even further.

It is also important to note that asking junior doctors to relocate when they are willing to continue serving in their current roles adds unnecessary costs to both the government and the doctors.

To address these issues, the MMA requests that selection criteria for permanent positions set by the Ministry of Health (MOH) and the Public Service Department (JPA) be made known to all applicants.

This will help greatly in gaining the trust of doctors and the general public, and also ensure fairness.

In terms of manpower planning, MMA has many times called for transparency and the need to publish data on the sort of manpower present at public health care facilities across the country.

This is important to prevent maldistribution of health care workers. This information should be augmented with the needs of each facility based on number of beds and services provided, such as:

- Daycare services and daycare operating theatres.
- Inpatient and outpatient services.
- Regular and specialty clinics.

This can then show the numbers each facility needs in terms of House Officers (HOs), Medical Officers (MOs), and specialists to run the service.

Comparing the actual staffing levels with the norms required will clearly identify any shortages or critical gaps.

This approach will support transparency, aid in fair resource distribution, and address critical staffing gaps across health care facilities.

The MMA stands with our junior doctors in calling for a fair, transparent, and effective placement process that supports their careers and helps the health care needs of the nation.

It is important to retain their confidence in the system, which in turn will help retain our talented health care professionals in service of the nation.

*Dr Kalwinder Singh Khaira is president of the Malaysian Medical Association (MMA).*