

Malaysian Medical Association urges MoH to consider digitalised mapping of human resources in public healthcare

By Marilyn Ten on August 8, 2024, Thursday at 8:01 AM [Sarawak](#)

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KUCHING (Aug 8): The Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) has urged the Ministry of Health (MoH) to consider its proposal for a digitalised mapping of human resources.

MMA president Dr Azizan Abdul Aziz said this would significantly help address the uneven workforce distribution in public healthcare seen throughout the country.

“This data-driven approach would facilitate better decision-making and ultimately improve healthcare services and delivery for the population,” she said in a statement.

Her statement came following the decision by MoH to reinstate the full 90-day maternity leave entitlement for medical officers at the Hulu Langat district health office in Selangor on Aug 6.

Dr Azizan extended her gratitude to Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad for his prompt attention in looking into this maternity leave situation.

“While we appreciate the ministry’s swift resolution of this issue, it underscores the need for improvements within the MoH’s human resources department.

“This situation could have been avoided with more effective foresight and planning from the department,” she said.

She noted that it has become evident that many challenges in the healthcare system stemmed from inadequate human resources planning.

“Despite the Health Minister’s commitment to enhancing the welfare of healthcare workers, there remains a disconnect at the operational level concerning the needs of workforce, as demonstrated by this recent incident,” she said.

In addition to the MMA’s suggestion for digitalised mapping of human resources, Dr Azizan said there is also an urgent need for the Public Service Department (JPA) to review its General Order, specifically on the item of maternity leave, which is currently set at a minimum of 60 mandatory days, up to 90 days.

“The Employment Act 1955 was amended last year, resulting in maternity leaves of 98 days for mothers. This is a fantastic move that the MMA supports.

“Unfortunately, this causes a double standard between the public and private sectors, as seen in this current case, civil servants may get 38 days of maternity leave lesser than their counterparts in the private sector,” she said.

She stressed that maternity protection is a human right enshrined in Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

“Best practices have seen it set at 98 days (14 weeks). It is not merely a benefit but a crucial period for the health and well-being of both mother and child.

“A shorter maternity leave period undermines the essential recovery time needed by new mothers and compromises the critical early bonding period between mother and infant, which is fundamental to the child’s development and the mother’s mental health,” she said.

She said the decision disregards the well-established benefits of the standard 98-day maternity leave, which include adequate physical recovery from childbirth, support for successful breastfeeding, and the mitigation of postpartum depression.

“Reducing this period not only puts undue stress on our dedicated medical officers but also potentially impacts the quality of care they can provide upon returning to work prematurely,” she said.