

Govt should accelerate plan to increase healthcare allocation from Budget 2025, says MMA

Sunday, 08 Sep 2024

4:31 PM MYT



KUCHING: The government's plan to increase the country's healthcare allocation should be accelerated starting from the upcoming Budget 2025, not only for infrastructure development but also for human capital, says Datuk Dr Kalwinder Singh Khaira *(pic)*.

The Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) president said while the MMA appreciated the government's initiative to introduce a new salary scheme for civil servants commencing this December, other issues affecting government doctors remain.

"Like the on-call allowances, which we hope the Budget will provide for. We note that the Government has said there will be changes in the on-call allowances.

"We hope that the increase in quantum will be appropriate and apt for the responsibilities the doctors undertake," he said in an MMA statement on Sunday (Sept 8).

According to him, the increment in on-call allowances would be a recognition to doctors who provide round-the-clock care for hospital patients.

"This duty has never been a choice but a necessity in providing healthcare to patients and as such, entails many sacrifices by doctors who have to be in hospitals during weekends, public holidays, and also on family occasions. They should be appropriately acknowledged," he said.

Dr Kalwinder said it was also vital to retain medical talents, especially among junior doctors, as they would be the backbone of the nation's healthcare system in the future.

"Hopefully, the conundrum of contract doctors and permanent posts will be settled soon while opportunities for post-graduate training locally need to be enhanced with the young doctors being given the choice to choose the pathway which is suitable for them," he said.

He said these efforts needed to be a win-win situation, as the country could no longer afford to continually lose doctors due to resignations and brain drain as they were prompted to work overseas.

Aside from junior doctors, he hoped the government would urgently look into the future of senior specialists and sub-specialists, who had not only provided invaluable care to patients but would also be needed to teach, mentor, and guide the younger doctors.

"Many have been stagnating at Grade UD56 for many years. More Jawatan Utama Sektor Awam (JUSA) posts need to be created on a yearly basis to open up the bottleneck that exists now," he added. – Bernama