

MMA commends Health Ministry's move to reassign nurses

By **TEH ATHIRA YUSOF**

Tuesday, 09 Jan 2024

10:05 PM MYT

PETALING JAYA: The reassignment of nurses from clinics to wards is a good move to optimise nursing staff amid shortage of staff issues at public healthcare facilities, says Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) president Dr Azizan Abdul Aziz.

She said the reassignments could even reduce the workload significantly, especially in hospital wards affected by the uneven distribution of healthcare workers previously highlighted by MMA.

"We commend the Health Minister and the Health director-general for their progressive efforts and encourage continued commitment to reshaping the healthcare workforce distribution in addressing the healthcare needs of the population.

"We hope the positions vacated as a result of the reassignments will be promptly filled to prevent any disruptions to services. The importance of training must also be emphasised," she said in a statement on Tuesday (Jan 9).

Dr Azizan pointed out that such shortages in healthcare personnel have underscored the importance of digitalising the public healthcare system.

"We believe data-driven decisions and real-time monitoring will be the way forward for effective planning of workforce placement," she said.

On another matter, the Health Ministry said staff would be trained accordingly before being assigned with specific clinical tasks and procedures.

"To ensure the best quality of nursing care provided to patients, it is important to strategically station nurses at sites that require specific nursing skills, particularly in wards.

"The ministry continues to prioritise the well-being of nurses who have always been committed to providing the best health care services to Malaysians," it said in a statement on Tuesday.

The ministry said this in response to a report by health portal CodeBlue that there were plans to relocate "100%" of nurses from specialist clinics – excluding those in clinical areas like obstetrics and gynaecology (O&G) and paediatrics – to wards, due to a severe shortage of nurses in public hospitals and insufficient nursing graduates.

The ministry said it would re-strategise the placement of human resources across the ministry as quality patient care hinges on a positive work environment.

"A strategic mobilisation and placement of healthcare workforce, including nurses and medical assistants, are meticulously planned and executed by the ministry without compromising clinical services and the safety of patients.

"This is pertinent in ensuring adequate and skill-matched staffing aligns with the commitment to enhance patient care and safety, contributing to the overall effectiveness of healthcare services.

"Besides that, in a bid to optimise the healthcare services, nurses and medical assistants will be placed according to their core competency, complementing each other," it said.

"The ministry would like to reiterate that it is highly committed to improving healthcare services across the country while aimed at charting the way forward for comprehensive improvements in the healthcare sector with the passing of the Health White Paper," read the statement.