

Hold hospital heads accountable for overworked housemen, says Malaysian Medical Association

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By: FMT Reporters



The Malaysian Medical Association said the health ministry must move towards enforcing a 45-hour work week for public healthcare workers as the current 60 to 62 hours are still burdensome. (Bernama pic)

PETALING JAYA: The Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) has called for hospital directors to be held accountable if the weekly limit of 60 to 62 work hours for housemen is not enforced.

MMA president Dr R Thirunavukarasu said the circular on the work hours issued yesterday by health director-general Dr Mahathar Abd Wahab was merely a reminder about an existing directive.

He said the fact that Mahathar needed to issue the reminder showed that the work hour cap was not being followed consistently in hospitals.

“Reports of housemen working up to 85 hours a week are deeply concerning. This is not just a welfare issue. Housemen are in our hospitals to be trained as safe and competent doctors.

“When they are exhausted, their ability to learn is compromised. Patient safety is also at risk. The immediate priority is clear: the 60 to 62-hour weekly cap must be enforced, not just on paper.

“Hospital directors must be held accountable for this,” he said in a statement.

Thirunavukarasu said hospital directors should not need to be reminded about the requirement to honour the leave entitlements of housemen,

saying these are rights under the existing regulations.

He said denying housemen of these rights, or even substituting them, is unacceptable.

He also said the health ministry must review the weekly work hour limit in the longer term, adding that working 60 hours a week was still very burdensome for public healthcare workers.

“MMA’s position has been consistent – Malaysia must move towards a maximum of 48 hours, and eventually, 45 hours.