



Put the needs of the people first, MMA tells UiTM

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The Malaysian Medical Association says UiTM should consider temporarily opening its cardiothoracic surgery programme to non-Bumiputeras to address the critical specialist shortage and save lives.



Malaysian Medical Association president Dr Azizan Abdul Aziz said UiTM needs to support efforts to produce more cardiothoracic surgeons. (MMA pic)

PETALING JAYA: The Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) has called on Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM) to prioritise public health needs by temporarily opening up its cardiothoracic surgery postgraduate programme to non-Bumiputeras.

MMA president Dr Azizan Abdul Aziz said the country's acute shortage of specialists, especially cardiothoracic surgeons, has led to prolonged waiting times for critical surgeries and caused fatalities.

"There are people waiting between six months to a year for a bypass surgery in our public healthcare system. Some die while waiting," she said in a statement.

“And with the high prevalence of non-communicable diseases in the country, we can expect the number of people needing these life-saving procedures performed by cardiothoracic surgeons to increase.”

Azizan said healthcare should not be politicised and UiTM needs to support efforts to produce more cardiothoracic surgeons.

“If UiTM can open its doors to international students, we don’t see why it can’t open up to all fellow Malaysians, on a need basis.”

Health news portal CodeBlue recently reported that UiTM was willing to “temporarily” accept non-Bumiputera trainees from parallel pathway programmes into its cardiothoracic surgery programme.

Dr Raja Amin Raja Mokhtar, from UiTM’s medical faculty, had suggested this as a solution to the non-recognition of some trainees’ qualifications.

Higher education minister Zambry Abdul Kadir had said there had been no discussions on this matter.

Malaysiakini later quoted the institution’s vice-chancellor Shahrin Sahib as saying that UiTM will remain closed to non-Bumiputeras, but will accept whatever the government decides with the king’s blessings.