



Schomos launches ‘wage theft’ survey among doctors in hospitals

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K. Parkaran

The body representing doctors in public hospitals is seeking information of the

practice of requiring medical officers to perform extra work for no pay.



The MMA grouping is seeking information on improper practices at public hospitals that have become normalised and embedded into institutional culture. (Bernama pic)

PETALING JAYA: The Malaysian Medical Association’s (MMA) section concerning house officers, medical officers and specialists (Schomos) has launched a “wage theft” survey among doctors in public hospitals to find out the extent to which they are being forced to work extra hours without pay.

The ad hoc survey is seeking information on doctors being told to work on weekends, after office hours or in the form of passive calls without being able to claim their dues.

It is also examining the practice of medical staff pooling funds to assist patients who cannot afford essential items, amid delays

in the hospital's welfare aid approval process.

Schomos is said to represent about 50,000 doctors, according to its chairman Dr Timothy Cheng.

"In light of recent events, Schomos is doing an online survey to collect more information on these practices that can be channelled to the government," it told its members.

Schomos said it is also seeking information on other hospital practices, financial or otherwise, perceived by doctors to be improper but which have become normalised and embedded into institutional culture.

In its questionnaire, Schomos asked doctors whether they had previously raised these concerns with their superiors, and if any action had been taken in response. It also encouraged them to upload documentary evidence to substantiate their claims.

A doctor who wished to remain anonymous said there were many cases in which they were compelled to perform weekend rounds at hospitals without pay, especially at university hospitals where they are at the mercy of their lecturers.

"A health ministry circular clearly states that any doctor who works for more than four hours on a weekend is eligible for a passive call allowance.

"Not only is their weekend with their family members disrupted, they have to work for free and burden themselves with the risk of malpractice," he told FMT.

He said the full extent of the practice is not known but stressed it should not happen at

all, calling it one of the reasons for the huge brain drain in public hospitals. The response to the survey may reveal how rampant this form of abuse is, he added.

There are two types of on-call allowances for doctors: full and passive. Doctors on full call are required to remain in the hospital for 24 hours and receive compensation of RM200 on weekdays and RM220 on weekends.

Those on passive call, who remain on standby from home, are paid RM80, but are entitled to RM140 if they are called in and work for more than four hours.