

# Additional manpower needed if short-stay wards becomes reality

By **Teh Athira Yusof** - January 23, 2023 @ 3:54pm



*Additional manpower such as doctors, nurses, paramedics and other relevant personnel are needed to manage "short-stay" wards. - NSTP/MOHAMAD SHAHRIL BADRI SAALI (for illustration purposes only)*

KUALA LUMPUR: Additional manpower such as doctors, nurses, paramedics and other relevant personnel are needed to manage "short-stay" wards, the Malaysian Medical Association said.

MMA president Dr Muruga Raj Rajathurai said the high patient load at public healthcare facilities is a burden too heavy for the government to bear by itself.

He was referring to the recently announced "short-stay wards" by the Health Minister Dr Zaliha Mustafa to address overcrowding issues at the emergency department of government-run hospitals.

"We welcome the move. However, additional manpower: doctors, nurses, paramedics and more will still be required to run these wards.

"The Health Minister has rightly pointed out that the private sector played an important role during the pandemic.

"More public-private collaborations should be explored as the demands for healthcare services are increasing. The solution for the short-stay ward can be possible through public-private collaboration.

Dr Muruga said patients needing primary care services can be referred to private general practitioners (GPs) through public-private collaboration.

"We also welcome the ministry's plans to look into collaborating with the private sector. There are more than 8,000 private GPs nationwide.

"Such a move, we believe will significantly help reduce the overcrowding we see at government healthcare facilities as the majority of the cases public healthcare facilities see daily are chronic illnesses most of which can be handled by a GP.

"Patients may also find it more convenient to go to a nearby private clinic for their follow-ups.

Yesterday, Dr Zaliha said the setting up of the short-stay wards with space permitting is among several short-, medium- and long-term solutions planned and being looked into by the ministry to address overcrowding issues at the emergency department at government hospitals.