

MMA: Look into regulating mobile caregiving apps

Sunday, 10 Apr 2022

PETALING JAYA: The government should look at regulating mobile home care services, says Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) president Dr Koh Kar Chai.

MMA, he said, is not aware of any regulations that cover the gig model of mobile home care for the elderly.

“Taking care of the aged is not an easy task, and we need to move away from the ‘maid model’ of caring,” he said.

Regulation of mobile home care for the elderly should be looked into, as this may turn out to be a popular model of care in the near future, he said.

“Managing an aged person with comorbidities can be quite challenging and requires prior training of the caregiver.”

Homes for the elderly in urban and suburban areas around the country are subject to regulations and audits, he said, so emphasis should be given on regulating mobile aged care services to ensure that providers offer high quality care.

When contacted, Public Service Department director-general Datuk Seri Mohd Shafiq Abdullah said the government is concerned about the minimum standards for such services, but it also does not want to over-regulate.

“We can implement minimum standards for safety and quality so that people receive satisfactory services.

“It’s not good to over-regulate certain things. If the people want to do a good thing, they should do it properly,” he said.

Likening the gig model of home care services with doctors on-call, Mohd Shafiq, who is former Health Ministry secretary-general, said such services by either NGOs or private entities must have government approval.

“The process and procedures they follow must be sanctioned by (the relevant) ministry.

“Providers should also have the required qualifications and experience,” he said.

He called on those concerned to change their mindset and play a role in creating awareness and setting market standards.

“Compare the apps and services to determine the satisfactory level. This will make the industry market-driven and people can make informed decisions on their choices,” he said.