

MMA Wants To Brief PM Candidates On Health Care Reform

By CodeBlue | 26 October 2022

The country's largest doctors' group is writing to political coalitions to brief their prime minister candidates on needed health care reforms, before the coalitions finalise their GE15 manifestos.



*Malaysian Medical Association president Dr Muruga Raj Rajathurai.
Picture courtesy of the Malaysian Medical Association.*

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 26 – The Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) today urged all prime minister candidates to meet with it for a briefing on health care issues and needed reforms to Malaysia's health care system.

MMA president Dr Muruga Raj Rajathurai called for the engagement before political coalitions finalise their election manifestos for the 15th general election, saying it would write an official invite to the political coalitions today.

The three major political coalitions – Barisan Nasional (BN), Pakatan Harapan (PH), and Perikatan Nasional (PN) – have yet to release their GE15 manifestos.

BN's prime minister candidate is incumbent Prime Minister Ismail Sabri Yaakob, whereas PH and PN have named PKR president Anwar Ibrahim and Bersatu president Muhyiddin Yassin as their prime minister hopefuls respectively.

“We will provide them with more details on the issues that were highlighted in our press statement issued last week, present practical solutions and it will be up to the candidates to take up our suggestions and decide on including them in their manifestos,” Dr Muruga said in a statement.

“But the new government must keep their promises to the people on all that is pledged in their manifesto. The MMA will not hesitate to call out the government if they fail to deliver on their promises for health care post-GE15.”

In [MMA's recent press statement](#), the doctors' group urged political coalitions to address eight areas in health care, namely health care human resources, access to health care, health care financing, better recognition of the role of general practitioners (GPs), support the development and growth of the private health care sector, enforcement of the Pathology Act 2007, the tobacco generational end game, and early health education.

MMA said that the solutions it intends to present to the PM candidates and their coalitions come from MMA's various engagements held over the years with its 16,000 over members, GPs, specialists, Health Ministry officials, former health ministers, former Health directors general, academicians, and various medical groups and experts.

“The prime minister candidates must be aware of all the issues on the ground faced by the public who represent the patients and the health care workers who are providing the health care services.

“Only then can they come up with a good manifesto for health. It should be noted that the new government will inherit all these issues, so it is best to familiarise themselves with it now,” Dr Muruga said.

MMA also pointed out that Malaysia is “still far behind” on preparing for the country’s ageing crisis.

“Time is running out and a proper framework, with the right policies need to be in place now. These are just a few reasons why it is important for the new government to ensure that healthcare reforms remain a priority. Malaysians from all walks of life will stand to benefit from these reforms.”

Malaysia has already reached ageing nation status, with the population aged 65 years and above expected to reach 7.3 per cent this year, according to the Economic Outlook 2023 Report by the Finance Ministry, meeting the 7 per cent threshold for the conventional international definition of an “ageing society”.

DAP central executive committee Howard Lee told a forum last Saturday that a care economy to expand care for the aged and people who can’t live independently would be among PH’s key election pledges.

However, the incumbent Pasir Pinji assemblyman said that PH does not plan to reform the financing of health and aged care – specifically, payroll-funded social health insurance and a co-payment system – because the coalition believes that “now is not the time”.