

# MMA wants govt to review proposed penalties in Poisons Amendment Bill

By [Dhesegaan Bala Krishnan](#) - March 16, 2022 @ 1:17pm



Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) calls upon the government to review the proposed penalties and fine-tune the powers of pharmacy enforcement officers in the Poisons Amendment Bill 2022. - NSTP file pic

KUALA LUMPUR: The Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) wants the government to review the proposed penalties and fine-tune the powers of pharmacy enforcement officers in the Poisons Amendment Bill 2022.

The bill to amend the existing Poisons Act 1952 was tabled for first reading in Dewan Rakyat last Monday. It was initially tabled for first reading in November 2019 but was subsequently withdrawn to be reviewed and refined.

MMA president Dr Koh Kar Chai welcomed the Health Ministry's decision to exclude mandatory prescription upon request provision in the amendment bill.

However, he urged the ministry to review several proposals to impose heftier fines and longer jail time for certain offenses in the bill.

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"Amendments to the Poisons Act 1952 has finally been tabled in Parliament. The proposed amendments to this archaic act have been overdue.

"The act needs to be updated as the landscape in healthcare has significantly changed in recent years. We need to factor how medicine is practiced in this digital era

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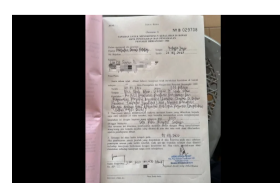
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practised in this digital era.

"The issue of massive fines has always been a contentious issue and more so, the proposal to increase jail time.

"We have always felt that certain offenses may not justify an increase in the jail sentence or even the presence of imprisonment as it will cause criminalisation of certain offenses which may be trivial and not endanger the health of anyone.

"With an increase in fines and the imposition of a jail sentence, many doctors will practice with the 'Sword of Damocles' hanging over their neck, more so, when the powers of pharmacy enforcement officers are enhanced," he said in a statement today.

Under the proposed Poisons Amendment Bill 2022, the general penalties for offences will include a maximum five years jail term, a compound of RM50,000, or both. Currently, the maximum jail term is one year and the maximum fine is RM3,000.

Besides allowing pharmacy enforcement officers to raid premises and seize drugs or other related items, the bill also protects them from civil lawsuits and criminal prosecutions for actions deemed necessary to enforce the Poisons Act.

Koh hopes there will be a relook at the proposed penalties as well as fine-tuning on the powers of pharmacy enforcement officers.

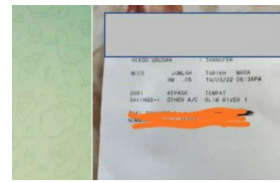
"These were all brought up in the engagements with the Health Ministry. If the bill is passed, we will need to look into the regulations which we hope will clear up our reservations of the proposed amendments," he added.

Deputy Health Minister Datuk Dr Noor Azmi Ghazali, on Monday, said the bill will be tabled for second reading during the current Dewan Rakyat sitting.

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