

Make sure medical staff not overworked with extended hours, says MMA

The Malaysian Medical Association says congestion at public healthcare facilities requires more than just a 'quick fix' solution.

[FMT Reporters](#) - 13 Mar 2023, 5:49pm



The health ministry says 52 government clinics nationwide will operate longer hours to reduce overcrowding at hospital emergency departments. (Bernama pic)

PETALING JAYA: The health ministry must ensure that there is sufficient manpower following its decision to extend the operating hours at selected government health clinics, the Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) said.

It said insufficient manpower could lead to healthcare workers being overworked.

“Sufficient doctors, nurses and support staff will be crucial to its success,” MMA president Dr Muruga Raj Rajathurai said in a statement welcoming the decision to extend the hours at several government clinics.

He said that while the extended hours may be a “quick fix” to the current congestion at public healthcare facilities, the ministry must look into mid- and long-term sustainable solutions.

“Among the solutions are the outsourcing of its non-critical cases to private GP (general practitioner) clinics which the government has planned for under its Skim Perubatan Madani,” he said.

Muruga Raj said the extended operating hours at these clinics would not only provide an opportunity for former government doctors to earn an income, but private GPs can also earn additional income.

“There are around 4,000 new private clinics in the country (and) some of these clinics have been set up and run by young doctors who were previously contract doctors in the system,” he said, adding that a number of them would close their clinics early.

On Saturday, the health ministry announced the extended hours at 52 health clinics nationwide to reduce overcrowding at hospital emergency departments.

The operating hours for health clinics in the Klang Valley have been extended from 5pm to 9.30pm from Mondays to Fridays. They will be open from 8am till noon on Saturdays.

In Kedah, Kelantan and Johor, the operating hours have been extended from 5pm to 9.30pm from Sundays to Thursdays. They will be open from 8am till noon on Saturdays.

Health minister Dr Zaliha Musafa had also called on private general practitioners and contract doctors to take part in the initiative to extend operating hours at some health clinics to ensure its success.