



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

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My dear friends and colleagues, 2025 is upon us and as usual, healthcare issues were on the front page and on social media again in January.

Regarding WBB

The issue of the WBB (*waktu bekerja berlainan*) was one that united almost all doctors and doctors' groups in the country. MMA was at the lead informing the Health Ministry that this was not feasible nor acceptable to the doctors on the ground.

The concept of asking doctors to work two straight shifts including the graveyard shift, but without any allowances, was taken as something not right and which will affect patient care and also the doctors well-being. Even though WBB, which requires additional manpower, was supposed to be started in some units and hospitals, it was the view of most that the manpower issues at present which are quite dire in some healthcare facilities should be addressed first.

Doctors have also been waiting for the promised increase in the on call allowances as was announced during the budget presentation last year by the Prime Minister. However this increase was tied to be only for those doctors in units able to implement WBB.

This was not what was expected as it was a valid expectation of all doctors who are serving the public with great dedication that any on call increment will be across the board for everyone.

MMA is very thankful that we had the opportunity to meet with YBMK and senior KKM officials on 23 January 2025 on this, and also other issues, relating to Government



With YBMK and senior KKM officials



MMA delegation with the parliamentary special health team

doctors. MMA had the opportunity to put up all its reasons for not supporting WBB and also laid out its suggestions for improvements.

MMA had asked that the issue of maldistribution of doctors be addresses urgently. There are many ways of improving the work life balance of doctors. With adequate numbers in each unit and department, based on the services provided and norms, the frequency of the on call days can be reduced to an acceptable level rather than the present condition in some facilities where the reduced manpower leads to doctors doing very frequent calls which in turn lead to burn outs.

Time-Off

The concept of time off post-active call has been there for some time and even has been allowed via a 2009 KKM circular. However, to date only some were able to avail themselves of this benefit, due to manpower and administrative issues. MMA has asked YBMK and KKM that those on active calls be given PM off mandatorily.

It will be a small step in allowing these doctors to take rest and recharge. It will need some adjustments in workflow in clinics, etc., but it is something that should be implementable.

At the meeting, MMA also acknowledged the intentions behind the WBB proposal but felt that any proposals and enhanced benefits planned should be able to be extrapolated to all hospitals and doctors. MMA also highlighted that engagement with doctors and MMA should be done at an early stage rather than when decisions have been made.

As the leading organisation, MMA stands ready to engage, cooperate and constructively offer suggestions for the betterment of doctors in public service. Other than WBB, MMA had also brought

up other issues of importance to government doctors. MMA called for transparency in the selection of those getting permanent posts and the need to inform all being considered the criteria for selection.

MMA is of the view that selection and then the appointment should be on a cohort basis and those not successful due to lack of posts should be given priority to get the permanent posts at the next exercise. It is imperative that all efforts be made to inform the doctors that they have a future in the country.

In addition to the meeting with YBMK and KKM, in January too, MMA was invited to present to the Healthcare Reform Taskforce under the Prime Ministers Advisory Council (PMAC). The meeting chaired by Prof Yeah Kim Leng was interactive and an opportunity for MMA to highlight its views.

MMA Presentation

On 6 February 2025, MMA was invited to present its views and suggestions to the Parliamentary Special Select Committee on Health in the Parliament building. This presentation and interaction with its parliamentarian members was an opportunity for MMA to highlight issues concerning both the public sector health services and also some of the issues affecting the private sector.

We will like to thank the committee chairman, YB Tuan Suhaizan Bin Kaiat and all the members for listening and understanding and hope that the issues raised and suggestions proposed will be highlighted in parliament.

Further developments are ongoing, and I will provide more insights in my next article. Until then, stay positive and take care of your health.



MMA delegation in the Parliament building