



Malaysian Medics International™

Press Statement

“Clarification on The Latest Deals for Contract Healthcare Professionals”

17th Sept 2021 - In light of the recent announcements by the Health Minister, YB Tuan Khairy Jamaluddin during the 14th parliamentary session, Malaysian Medics International (MMI) would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to the Ministry of Health (MoH) for pledging to improve the contract system for healthcare professionals.

Now, the government is looking for possible ways to provide contract healthcare professionals with the same opportunities as their permanent counterparts, allowing them to continue their specialization training. Thus, a special committee has been appointed to plan comprehensive and operable solutions. The current plans in motion are: a) Applications for equivalent sponsorship as the existing federal scholarship; b) Applications to create additional permanent posts according to the needs of the facilities; c) Strategies to increase employment opportunities in the health and private services; d) The provisions of the Medical Act 1971, the Dental Act 1971, and the Registration of Pharmacists Act 1950 as well as a more flexible implementation mechanism for specialty studies; e) The suitability of amending the Pensions Act 1980 or introducing equivalent improvements.¹

We acknowledge that these proposed plans have yet to be implemented. In the interim, we hereby request for the MoH to consider the following suggestions as we move forward in improving the contract system :

1. For a publication that includes further details and clarification of the mentioned plans

With regards to the plan mentioned², we request a detailed clarification on the budget allocation of the Federal Scholarship (*Hadiah Latihan Persekutuan*) for the contract doctors. Simultaneously, as we requested in our previous statement³, dated June 30, 2021, we would like to once again call for complete transparency in the selection criteria for the Federal Scholarship, as we strongly believe that fair and equitable distribution is indispensable in the workplace. Ergo, to provide further assurance for our future and current healthcare professionals, MMI agrees that a clear outline of the implementation plan will strengthen the faith of our public servants to continue serving our country to their fullest.

2. For due consideration on the following suggestions to be included in the comprehensive plan

Other than the plans announced by the Health Minister, we plead for the MoH to provide a detailed outline of the government's plan, whilst working in collaboration with the Ministry of Finance (MoF) and other relevant stakeholders, to improve the health system. We suggest that immediate actions be financed under Budget 2022 whereas long-term actions can be incorporated into the Thirteenth Malaysia Plan (RMK13).

Additionally, we urge the government to set up an independent National Healthcare Systems Reform Committee which includes representatives from relevant government agencies, independent healthcare professionals, and representatives from medical associations (including medical students' associations). This committee will be responsible for drafting a National Healthcare Systems Transformation Blueprint outlining long-term actions which will be tabled to and passed by Parliament.

Next, we propose for the government to consider implementing equivalent welfare benefits for contract and permanent healthcare professionals. These include applying similar criteria to qualify for a Federal Scholarship, extending eligibility for paid study leave to contract healthcare professionals, allowing special unrecorded leave for candidates to handle procedures related to other specialization pathways, and standardizing requirements for entry into a local masters program.

3. Increasing resources to increase the number of candidates taken per intake

Despite the surplus of medical officers in Malaysia, there is still an insufficient number of specialists⁴. This can be attributed to the inadequate funding allocations, insufficient teaching consultants, and training facilities⁵. Hence, we urge the MoH to work closely with the MoF to increase the funding allocation for postgraduate medical education and to scrutinize the root of the deficit of such resources. Finally, we urge the government to study the possibilities of incorporating qualified private healthcare providers into the local specialists' training program. This measure could help expand existing specialists' training opportunities significantly and subsidize the government's financial and resources burden in training new specialists. Subsequently, this could increase the number of candidates successfully enrolling in specialty training programs offered by accredited local medical universities.

Healthcare professionals in training are the backbone of our future healthcare system. We plead that they are given the opportunities to reach their full potential during training and that specialized options be guaranteed. The welfare of contract doctors should be protected to ensure that young doctors are of high quality and can best serve the country.

Thank you.

MALAYSIAN MEDICS INTERNATIONAL
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About Malaysian Medics International (MMI)

MMI is an international medical student-led organisation that aims to connect, educate, and cultivate. Since our inception in 2013, we have grown into a global network of more than 200 leaders from seven countries around the world. Presently, we are an active advocate for inclusivity and diversity, reform in medical education, and the welfare of our junior doctors and medical students.

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References:

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