



Patron: His Royal Highness, Sultan of Perak, Sultan Nazrin Muizzuddin Shah

ACADEMY OF MEDICINE OF MALAYSIA

17 July 2020

PRESS STATEMENT

Create Meaningful Training Pathways and Permanent Posts for Medical Officers

We refer to the Health Minister's statement in parliament on [13 July 2020](#). He said that the government will not be offering sponsored specialist training to contract officers as there are 23,928 medical officers (MO) who have yet to undergo specialist or subspecialist training.

The Covid-19 pandemic has shown that qualified, well-trained specialists are a national asset, and we should strive to have an adequate number of them in our hospitals. The Academy of Medicine of Malaysia urges the government to create meaningful training pathways, longer-term contracts and eventually, permanent posts for MOs, especially as they have served on the frontlines during the pandemic.

The contract hiring policy introduced in 2016 was a laudable short-term solution to ensure that graduates were given the opportunity to complete their medical training. As this first batch of doctors are approaching the end of their contracts, there must now be a long-term plan to provide them with permanent posts and clear pathways for continuing their postgraduate studies.

We recommend introducing longer-term contracts for MOs, i.e. 4 to 5 years, that will provide them with better job security and experience to pursue specialist training. Meanwhile, the government must increase the number of permanent posts available in the country. There must also be clear eligibility guidelines and performance indicators set for MOs to be offered permanent positions at the end of their contracts. As it stands, there is uncertainty around the fate of these MOs once their two-year training ends. This must be addressed to ensure that the frontliners who served Malaysians when we needed it most are appropriately recognised.

Besides that, contract officers are not eligible for local postgraduate specialisation courses, even if they are self-funded. We acknowledge that it would be financially unsustainable for the government to sponsor all MOs through specialist training. While there have always been doctors who paid for their own postgraduate studies or gone abroad to pursue international qualifications, this is not a realistic option for many graduates.

Therefore, it is incumbent upon the government to provide alternative pathways in public institutions to MOs who wish to specialise. If contract-based hiring is going to grow more common, the government must create opportunities for contract MOs to pursue postgraduate specialisation courses too.

This pandemic has shown us that Malaysia is armed with highly capable healthcare professionals. We owe the next generation of doctors security and recognition for the challenges they will continue to face as the pandemic is not yet over. We must provide long-term solutions by creating meaningful training pathways and more permanent posts.

We, the under-signed:

Academy of Medicine of Malaysia (Professor Dr Rosmawati Mohamed, Master)
College of Anaesthesiologists (Dato Dr Jahizah Hassan, President)
College of Dental Specialists (Professor Dato' Dr Lian Chin Boon, President)
College of Emergency Physicians (Dr Ridzuan Dato' Mohd Isa, President)
College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (Dr Michael Samy, President)
College of Ophthalmologists (Dr Nur Fariza Ngah, President)
College of Paediatrics (Professor Dr Thong Meow Keong, President)
College of Pathologists (Professor Dr Cheong Soon Keng, President)
College of Physicians (Dr Letchuman Ramanathan, President)
College of Public Health Medicine (Dato' Indera Dr Sha'ari Ngadiman, President)
College of Radiology (Dr Amir Fuad Hussain, President)
College of Surgeons (Professor Dr April Camilla Roslani, President)

(The Academy of Medicine of Malaysia, embracing 11 Colleges and 15 Chapters, is a registered body representing medical specialists in Malaysia)

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