

AKHBAR : THE STAR
MUKA SURAT : 3
RUANGAN : NATION

KKM kaji penetapan deposit kos perubatan pekerja asing

823 syarikat tandatangani perjanjian jaminan bank dengan kementerian

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Kuala Lumpur: Kementerian Kesihatan (KKM) sedang mengkaji prosedur untuk penetapan deposit bank dengan KKM dari segi kadar dan tatacara kutipan agar jumlahnya mencukupi untuk membiayai kos perubatan pekerja asing yang mendapatkan rawatan di klinik dan hospital kerajaan.

Timbalan Menteri Kesihatan, Datuk Lukanisman Awang Sauni, berkata hingga Februari lalu, sejumlah 823 syarikat sudah menandatangani perjanjian jaminan bank dengan KKM bagi kemudahan perubatan pekerja asing mereka.

Perjanjian itu dilakukan di bawah 'Prosedur Permohonan Mendapatkan Kemudahan Rawatan Pesakit Dalam di Hospital KKM' dengan menggunakan surat jaminan syarikat dan Penyediaan Jaminan Bank.

"Melalui perjanjian ini, syarikat-syarikat swasta dikehendaki membayar jaminan bank berdasarkan bilangan pekerja.

"Contohnya, sebuah syarikat swasta perlu menyediakan jami-

nan bank sebanyak RM2,500 jika mempunyai 200 pekerja.

"Jika bil perubatan pekerja asing itu tidak diselesaikan dalam tempoh ditetapkan, potongan daripada jaminan bank akan dibuat untuk menampung pembayaran tertunggak," katanya menjawab soalan Senator Datuk Ahmad Ibrahim di Dewan Negara, semalam.

Ahmad bertanya adakah Kementerian akan memperketatkan dan memperkenalkan prosedur baharu terhadap pesakit warga asing yang menerima rawatan di klinik dan hospital kerajaan dengan syarat jaminan bayaran dan bayaran deposit 50 peratus sebelum menerima rawatan.

Lukanisman berkata, KKM sudah menetapkan agar bayaran deposit perlu dikutip daripada pesakit warga asing bagi setiap kemasukan di hospital selaras dengan peruntukan Perenggan 14, Perintah Fi (Perubatan) (Kos Perkhidmatan) 2014.

Surat Pekeliling Ketua Setiausaha Kementerian Kesihatan Malaysia Bilangan 2 Tahun 2019: Garis Panduan Pelaksanaan Perintah Fi (Perubatan) (Kos Perkhidmatan) 2014 juga menetapkan kadar deposit mengikut kelas wad dan jenis perkhidmatan perubatan.

Sebagai contoh, kadar deposit bagi prosedur perubatan di wad kelas tiga akan dikenakan caj deposit sebanyak RM1,400, manakala bagi kelas satu sebanyak RM7,000.

Menjawab soalan tambahan Ahmad mengenai jumlah warga



Lukanisman ketika menjawab soalan Senator Datuk Ahmad Ibrahim di Dewan Negara, semalam. (Foto BERNAMA)



asing yang menerima rawatan di hospital kerajaan tahun lalu, beliau berkata, sejumlah 72,078 warga asing menerima rawatan di fasiliti kesihatan kerajaan tahun lalu, dan sejumlah RM257

juta bayaran dikutip.

Jumlah kutipan yuran di hospital bagi warganegara mencatatkan RM268 juta tahun lalu.

"Jumlah keseluruhan bil perubatan yang tidak dibayar oleh warga asing di negara ini sehingga tahun lalu adalah RM40 juta.

"Ada laporan yang mendakwa kerajaan tidak dapat mengutip RM100 juta dalam bil perubatan tertunggak.

"Saya ingin menjelaskan, walaupun terdapat tunggakan dalam bil perubatan yang tidak di-

bayar, jumlah sebenarnya adalah RM40 juta," katanya fasiliti kesihatan di Sabah mencatatkan jumlah tertinggi dalam tunggakan bil perubatan yang tidak dibayar disebabkan pelbagai faktor:

Gagal langsung tunggakan bil

Februari lalu, BH dalam laporan memetik sumber KKM mendakwa ramai warga asing terutama pendatang asing tanpa izin (PATI) gagal melangsaikan tunggakan bil perubatan di klinik serta hospital kerajaan.

Ini termasuk kos bagi rawatan bersalin, kecemasan, pemeriksaan pesakit luar serta pengambilan ubat, sama seperti yang dinikmati rakyat tempatan yang lain.

Selain memberikan pelbagai helah, ada segelintir warga asing dikatakan menghilangkan diri selepas mendapatkan rawatan sehingga KKM terpaksa melupus hutang berkenaan.

Sumber itu memberitahu BH, angka terbaru menunjukkan sehingga akhir 2023, jumlah tunggakan membabitkan bil rawatan warga asing mencecah kira-kira RM100 juta.

Ketua Pengarah Kesihatan, Datuk Dr Muhammad Radzi Abu Hassan, ketika dihubungi BH ketika itu mengesahkan jumlah tunggakan berkenaan.

Di fahamkan, tindakan menyenarai hitam warga asing yang culas melangsaikan hutang bil perubatan hospital kerajaan sukar dilaksanakan kerana tiada sistem bersepadu yang menghubungkan data KKM dengan Jabatan Imigresen ketika ini.

Kerajaan perlu guna platform ASEAN beli ubat secara pukal

Kuala Lumpur: Kerajaan perlu melaksanakan usaha berterusan untuk menjadikan ASEAN sebagai platform pembelian ubat-ubatan dan peralatan kesihatan menerusi perolehan secara pukal.

Pengerusi Institut Jantung Negara (IJN), Tan Sri Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah, berkata kaedah itu dapat mengurangkan harga ubatan dan peralatan kesihatan, sekali gus membantu mengurangkan kos rawatan kepada pesakit.

"Kita lihat negara Kesatuan Eropah (EU), di Asia Barat dan juga negara Afrika, mereka menggunakan kaedah ini (perolehan secara pukal).

"Kita di sini ada platform. Pla-

form ASEAN adalah platform yang amat baik dan kalau boleh digunakan memang terbaik untuk kita dapatkan kerjasama padu daripada negara ASEAN.

"Perbincangan dari segi tanda aras contohnya, ubat-ubatan dengan negara lain (ASEAN) semua sudah bincang. Tapi sekarang, kita nak eratkan lagi kerjasama dari segi pelaksanaan perolehan secara pukal.

"Ini mungkin satu cara untuk kita kurangkan kos rawatan dan sebagainya," katanya ketika ditemui selepas menjadi tetamu rancangan Jendela Fikir terbitan BERNAMA Radio, semalam.

Bekas Ketua Pengarah Kesihatan itu berkata, dalam mem-

peroleh vaksin ketika dunia dilanda pandemik COVID-19 tidak lama dahulu, EU yang terdiri daripada 30 negara hanya diwakili satu pihak untuk berurusan dengan pihak pengeluar vaksin.

"Dalam perolehan vaksin di EU, ia tidak benarkan negara EU

itu berurusan dengan syarikat. Hanya seorang wakil EU yang mewakili 30 negara, jadi kuasa membeli 30 negara itu amat kuat. Bila jumlah tinggi, kita boleh turunkan harga dan penghantaran vaksin yang cepat.

"Untuk ubat-ubatan, di Asia Barat dan Afrika, mereka telah

“Kita lihat negara Kesatuan Eropah (EU), di Asia Barat dan juga negara Afrika, mereka menggunakan kaedah ini”

Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah,
Pengerusi Institut Jantung Negara (IJN)



jalankan pembelian secara pukal," katanya.

Katanya, kaedah itu terbukti berkesan di Malaysia dan menjimatkan perbelanjaan kerajaan.

"Kementerian Kesihatan (KKM) tahun lalu melaksanakan perolehan secara pukal membabitkan KKM, Kementerian Pendidikan Tinggi (KPT) dan Kementerian Pertahanan.

"Kita kenal pasti 82 ubat-ubatan untuk perolehan secara pukal iaitu kita dapat jimatkan hampir RM179 juta.

"Sebelum ini setiap kementerian beli asing, jadi kos meningkat tapi bila beli secara pukal, kita dapat jimat RM179 juta," katanya.

AKHBAR : BERITA HARIAN
MUKA SURAT : 4
RUANGAN : NASIONAL

Health Ministry reviews methods for payment of bills by foreigners

THE Health Ministry is reviewing the procedures for deposits and bank guarantees, in terms of rates and collection methods, to ensure they are sufficient to cover the medical expenses of foreigners seeking treatment at its facilities.

Deputy Health Minister Datuk Lukanisman Awang Sauni told the Dewan Negara that as of February, 823 companies had signed bank guarantee agreements with the ministry for medical facilities for their foreign workers.

"Through these agreements, private companies are required to pay a bank guarantee based on the number of employees. For instance, a private company must provide a bank guarantee of RM2,500 if it

employs 200 workers. If its medical bills are not settled within the specified period, deductions from the bank guarantee will be made to cover the outstanding payments involved," he said in response to a question from Senator Datuk Ahmad Ibrahim.

Ahmad had asked whether the ministry planned to tighten and introduce new procedures for foreign patients at government health

facilities, with the condition of guaranteed payment and a 50 per cent deposit before treatment.

Lukanisman said the ministry had mandated the collection of deposits from foreign patients for every hospital admission, as per Clause 14 of the Fees (Medical) (Cost of Services) Order 2014.

"The Circular of the Secretary-General, Ministry of Health

Through these agreements, private companies are required to pay a bank guarantee based on the number of employees.

DATUK LUKANISMAN AWANG SAUNI

Deputy health minister

Malaysia, no. 2 of 2019: Guidelines for the Implementation of the Fees Order (Medical) (Cost of Services) 2014, has established deposit rates based on ward class and type of medical service.

"For instance, the deposit for medical procedures in third-class wards is RM1,400, while in first-class wards, it's RM7,000."

He said 72,078 foreigners received treatment at government health facilities last year, paying a total of RM257 million in fees.

He said the total amount of unpaid medical fees from foreigners last year was RM40 million.

"There have been news reports claiming that we were unable to collect RM100 million in outstanding medical bills. This is untrue. While there were arrears in unpaid medical fees, the amount was RM40 million."

AKHBAR : NEW STRAITS TIMES
MUKA SURAT : 6
RUANGAN : NEWS / NATION

He teaches neurosurgeons, but can't be one in M'sia

By HO JIA WEN
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PETALING JAYA: Dr Lu Yeow Yuen completed his compulsory housemanship at the Sarawak General Hospital and then went abroad to qualify as a neurosurgeon.

He now wants to return to Malaysia to serve, but he cannot. The Malaysian Medical Council (MMC) has rejected his application to be registered on the National Specialist Register.

Lu says that he has a recognised

qualification under Section 14B (c) of the Medical Act 1971 as he has passed exams under the Fellowship of the Royal College of Surgeons of Ireland, FRCS (Ire).

Speaking to *The Star*, Lu said his qualifications are intercollegiate exams, where the Royal College of Surgeons – Glasgow, Edinburgh, England and Ireland combined to offer exams for the international community.

"Isat for the exam and obtained the FRCS (Ire), but MMC says my qualifications are different from the ones offered in the

United Kingdom.

"But my exam is exactly the same and the examiners are from the Royal College of Surgeons," he said.

He is now pursuing legal action and has been granted leave for judicial review proceedings against MMC and the Registrar of Medical Practitioners.

Lu described his rejection saga as similar to that of four other cardiothoracic surgeons who were also rejected by the MMC.

"We took the same intercollegiate exams; only theirs is with the

Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh, while mine is with Ireland," he said.

Lu has appealed three times internally with the MMC over the past three years.

"The Neurosurgery Specialist Subcommittee under MMC has actually approved my application before it went up to MMC, where it was rejected. I was told so by Dr Albert Wong Sii Hieng, who heads the department of neurosurgery in the Sarawak General Hospital," he said.

"I went abroad to train myself

and now I want to come back to serve, but the council is stopping me.

"Malaysia is definitely home for me. My wife and children are all in Malaysia. I have been trying to come back since Covid-19 times," he said, adding that he has been flying between Malaysia and Hong Kong, where he is now an assistant professor in neurosurgery at the Chinese University of Hong Kong.

He has also previously worked as a neurosurgeon in Singapore and Hong Kong.

Hope anew for heart, lung patients

Govt set to amend law to recognise more specialists

By ARNOLD LOH
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KUALA LUMPUR: Thousands of patients needing government specialist healthcare can expect a reprieve in June with Parliament expected to amend the Medical Act so that specialists and surgeons who had earlier been rejected can be recognised and help perform much-needed operations.

These surgeons are part of the Parallel Pathway Programme (PPP) which has since 2016 allowed the Health Ministry to directly train its medical officers to become specialists in public hospitals, without the need to go back to universities.

However, a differing view held by the Malaysian Medical Council (MMC), which governs the medical profession and education, has made it hard for such specialists to be recognised.

Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad said in a statement on Tuesday that the Cabinet would soon decide on amendments to the Act.

"Given the critical shortage of

medical specialists in public hospitals, the ministry intends to ask the Cabinet to expedite the proposed amendments, hopefully in June's third session of Parliament.

"Concurrently, efforts to bolster specialists training through home-grown master's programmes will be intensified," he added.

The issue became public when four Malaysian heart and lung trainee surgeons – the least available specialists in Malaysia – failed to become full surgeons despite passing their examinations under the cardiothoracic surgery PPP.

They were awarded Fellowships of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh (RCSEd) but MMC refused to recognise their fellowships.

There are only 14 heart and lung surgeons in public service now and several are retiring in a few years, while there are over 1,500 heart and lung disease patients urgently needing surgery.

Launched in 2016, the Health Ministry's PPP for heart and lung surgery was its first effort. The ministry has since developed 14

other specialist PPP training systems in the fields of urology, plastic surgery, anaesthesiology, family medicine, as well as obstetrics and gynaecology, to name a few.

These systems make it possible for the ministry to train its own doctors to become specialists, under the guidance of bodies such as the RCSEd instead of waiting for local public and private universities to produce postgraduate specialists.

However, conflicting opinions within MMC appears to be complicating the process.

The matter has also gained international attention when RCSEd president Prof Rowan W Parks, wrote a four-page letter to express concerns to Dzulkefly while Ireland ambassador Orla Tunney and UK deputy high commissioner David Wallace visited the minister.

"This goes against the principle of the partnership and work undertaken at the request of the ministry and places trained excel-

lent surgeons in an untenable, distressing and unfair position," Prof Parks wrote.

PPP training for government heart and lung surgeons was started by the Health Ministry, Academy of Medicine Malaysia, Malaysian Association for Thoracic and Cardiovascular Surgery and RCSEd in 2016.

As of now, 32 candidates have entered the training, four of whom completed it, while another eight have successfully passed their exit examinations, said Prof Parks.

This means there are now 12 newly-qualified Malaysian heart and lung surgeons but they are in a limbo as they remain unrecognised by MMC.

Prof Parks also said RCSEd were willing to meet MMC on its concerns over the PPP training, examination and qualification.

The Medical Act 1971 gives MMC broad powers to manage and decide on all matters concerning medical practitioners. MMC is

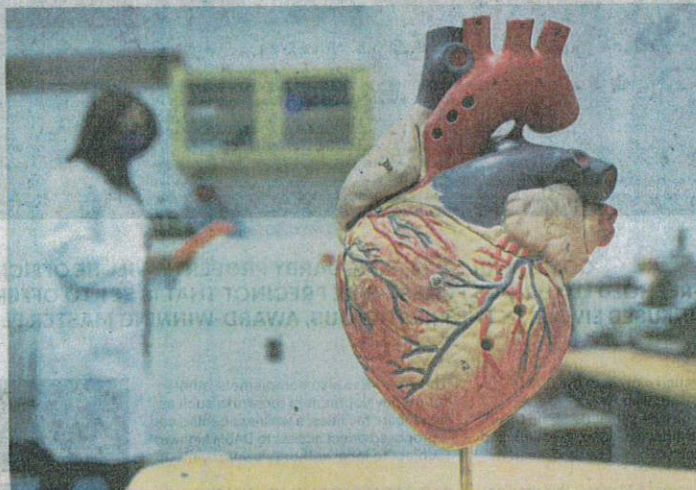
headed by the Health director-general and comprises appointed and elected medical professionals from the government, private sector and universities.

Tunney, in a statement to *The Star*, confirmed meeting with Dzulkefly about the Malaysian-Ireland Training Programme for Family Medicine, which is adopted as PPP training for family medicine specialists in Malaysia.

This is part of partnership between RCS of Ireland and University College Dublin, which has foreign campus status in Penang.

"There are currently 378 Malaysian doctors enrolled, in addition to the 22 who have already graduated," she said.

Wallace said UK medical institutions have been working in partnership with Malaysian counterparts to equip healthcare providers with the knowledge and expertise to keep pace with the evolving needs of a modern healthcare system.



Critical shortage: There are only 14 heart and lung surgeons in public service now and several are retiring in a few years.

From hair to heart and lungs – a history of surgeons

KUALA LUMPUR: Some 1,000 years ago, all surgeons were barbers. Yes, you read that right.

During wars in the United Kingdom, barbers who were skilled with razors treated wounded soldiers in need of surgery or amputation.

They stood apart from physicians, who were taught at universities. Barbers learned their skills in barber shops and battlefields.

Today, all surgeons must first obtain a medical degree, so they are doctors too. But some surgeons uphold their history of being distinct from physicians,

which is why surgeons often prefer the honorifics "Mr", "Miss" or "Mrs" instead of "Dr".

Between 1400s and 1500s, those barber-surgeons received royal charters to form the Royal College of Surgeons (RCS) and now there are four – in Edinburgh, England, Glasgow and Ireland.

Their postgraduate certifications are recognised by hospitals nearly all over the world.

The RCS of Edinburgh (RCSEd), which recently sent a four-page letter to Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad expressing concern that one of its post-

graduate qualifications for heart and lung (cardiothoracic) surgeons were not recognised, has had direct working relationships with the Health Ministry for over two decades.

The college's president Professor Rowan W Parks, in his letter, wrote that RCSEd was involved in the training of cardiothoracic surgeons here at least since 2000 when one of its surgeons, Pala Rajesh, was invited by Institut Jantung Negara (IJN) to start up video-assisted thoracoscopic surgery there.

"The RCSEd was also invited by

the ministry, Academy of Medicine of Malaysia (AMM) and the Malaysian Association for Thoracic and Cardiovascular Surgery (MATCVS) to help develop a national training programme in cardiothoracic surgery for the country," Prof Parks added.

This led to the parallel pathway programme (PPP) in 2016, which allowed the ministry to directly train its medical officers to be heart and lung surgeons.

Prof Parks pointed out that RCSEd made frequent visits between 2018 and 2022 – except during the pandemic – to check

on all the accredited training centres to make sure the PPP was well conducted at selected hospitals nationwide.

Prof Parks said on successfully passing the examination, candidates were awarded the Fellowship of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh (FRCSed) in Cardiothoracic Surgery, which qualifies them to practise even in the UK.

Last month, *The Star* reported that four surgeons who earned the FRCSed could not become full surgeons because their qualification was not locally recognised.