

20 August 2008

**PRESS STATEMENT
ON
E-KESIHATAN**

The Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) welcomes the announcement by the Minister of Transport, Datuk Ong Tee Keat regarding the e-Keshihatan scheme, the medical examination and the certification of commercial vehicle drivers, under consideration will be done in a more comprehensive and transparent format soon.

The members of the Association in their daily work have seen tragic deaths and injuries caused by road traffic accidents. The Association through its Sub Committee on Road Safety has promoted road safety programmes in schools and communities. This Committee did a study on the type of diseases and the percentage of drivers who would be unfit to drive commercial vehicles.

The MMA presented the results of this study to the then Minister of Transport, Datuk Dr Ling Liong Sik, and impressed upon him the need for regular medical examinations of commercial vehicle drivers. The aim of this move was to prevent medically unfit drivers, who would be dangerous to the public from driving, and improve safety on the roads. The Minister agreed to the implementation and it started off well.

Over the years of its execution, the medical certificate became another 'certificate' without achieving its objectives, mainly due to unscrupulous activities of certain groups. It is now a well-known reality that the certificates have been frequently forged and sometimes obtained by illegal means. If the Minister of Transport has evidence as reported of clinics breaking the law, then he should report them to the Malaysian Medical Council for appropriate action to be taken without running down private clinics and General Practitioners. Maybe the Minister should also investigate his Department and see if the Department is encouraging these activities.

The MMA and many other groups met with the Economic Planning Unit (EPU) a few months ago and discussed the need for methods to strengthen the system of medical certification. The EPU had directed the Ministry of Health and the MMA to come up with a format for this scheme. The MMA through a Technical Committee is in the process of drawing up this format.

We hope that the MMA, the largest professional body representing the medical profession, and which has been championing this cause will be included in any scheme which is being considered, to make this successful and achieve its objective of reducing road traffic accidents.

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