

21 January 2008

PRESS STATEMENT
ON
UNJUST PUNISHMENT TO A DOCTOR

The Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) was shocked to have read from the newspaper report that a doctor has been fined RM120,000 for not registering his clinic. When the Private Healthcare and Facilities Act was enforced, the Director-General of Health and the then Health Minister assured us this Act will be used against unregistered practitioners who pretend to be doctors in order to protect the public.

Here is a doctor, who is a USM graduate, registered with the Malaysian Medical Council (MMC) and has an Annual Practising Certificate. He was going to move to Putrajaya and had not registered his clinic in Desa Pandan. No doubt, he had breached the law in July 2007, but we are disappointed at the strict implementation of the law in the initial introduction of the Act. We urge a review of the punishment.

The Ministry of Health (MOH) should have given a stern warning to him before taking him to court. In addition, the MOH pressed for a deterrent sentence. We would like the Director-General of Health and the current Health Minister to set things straight. At least assure us that there will not be any such severe punishment for anyone whose offence may seem as a “minor” fault and also the circumstances under which it was committed – he was going to move his clinic, this is the initial period of implementation of the PHCF action and he is a registered doctor with a current APC. The doctor has learnt one bitter lesson; doctors should join up with the MMA to fight against unfair treatment for “minor” offences. The relevant authorities need to scrutinize the New Medical Act and all other Acts that are current and make sure that they are not harsh.

What a bitter lesson!

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