

28 July 2008

**PRESS STATEMENT
ON
THE GOVERNMENT'S PROPOSAL TO EASE REQUIREMENTS TO BRING HOME
DOCTORS FROM OVERSEAS**

The Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) read with interest the statement made by the Health Minister regarding the proposal to ease the requirement compelling each doctor to serve at a government hospital for three years in an effort to bring Malaysian doctors working overseas to come home and work in Malaysia. He also mentioned that the Ministry is ready to consider discarding the mandatory requirement for doctors aged 45 and above to work at the government hospitals. This is because these doctors have acquired a lot of experiences and skills from working abroad, so they need not have to fulfil that requirement.

The MMA wishes to express this proposal is not fair to the local graduates whereby previously everyone needed to complete three years compulsory service with the government. Now with the implementation of 2 years housemanship, doctors must work for 5 years with the government.

At the moment, there are already various incentives given to them including tax exemption on personal items, two cars are exempted from import and excise duties and road tax, their spouses and children are given citizenship six months after their return, and spouses with recognized qualifications and skills needed by the industries could also apply for study pass from the Immigration Department. However only 100 doctors have returned home so far.

We feel that if these doctors are given the opportunity, i.e. ease in compulsory service or no compulsory service, this will not address the problem in the government facilities. These opportunities will only open the gate for them to practice in private sector. There will be more imbalances between the public-private sectors.

The MMA agrees that the country needs more doctors serving in the government facilities. Currently, there are about 300-400 doctors resigning from the government services every year to practice privately. High rates of resignation due to dissatisfaction with government service, which include heavy workload, poor working conditions and low remuneration.

The MMA would like to propose to the Ministry to focus intervention in improving the remuneration, incentives, career development and working conditions for the government doctors to discourage them from resigning. Some suggestions need to be looked into seriously, e.g. create more promotional posts and hasten the process of promotions; revision of on call allowance and specialist allowance; and Hardship allowance for doctors working in rural areas, Sabah and Sarawak, etc. The MMA hopes the Minister will give serious attention to this issue.

**By : Datuk Khoo Kah Lin
President
Malaysian Medical Association**