

20 May 2009

To : Editor  
Letter to Editor  
The Star  
Menara Star  
15 Jalan 16/11, Section 16  
46350 Petaling Jaya

From : Dato' Dr Khoo Kah Lin  
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Dear Editor,

## **LETTER TO EDITOR**

The Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) would like to refer to the letter “*Deal for government docs reasonable*” (*The Star, 12 May 2009*) issued by the Corporate Communications Unit of Public Services Department (PSD), which stated that the initial salary of government Medical Officers is the highest compared to those of other schemes of service in the public sector.

The MMA acknowledges that there has been a significant increase in the salaries of government doctors over the past few years, and we would like to thank the PSD for having given due consideration to the requests of the Section Concerning House Officers, Medical Officers and Specialists (SCHOMOS) of the MMA to improve the remuneration of government doctors.

However, we would like to clarify a few statements which were made in that letter.

Firstly, with regards to on call allowance, we would like to point out that the RM150 per night on call allowance is only for those medical officers who are doing “active” on call (i.e. working 16 hours per day beyond their normal working hours). These are usually the medical officers in the Medical Unit, Surgical Unit, etc. Those medical officers working in less “critical” clinical departments like Pathology or Radiology are only eligible to claim between RM50 or RM90 per night on call allowance depending on the number of hours spent at the hospital after office hours and there are also some medical officers, e.g. those working at the health clinics who do not have any on call allowances.

Secondly, with regards to locum at RM80 per hour, this is a very good initiative by the Ministry of Health but unfortunately not all medical officers are given the opportunity to do this, as the extended clinic hours (5 pm to 9 pm) only involve 16 polyclinics out of more than 800 government clinics in the country. The locum work is mostly done by the doctors working at that particular polyclinic, and doctors working at other polyclinics (which do not have locum services) in the same district do not get any chance at all.

Thirdly, the statement that in 2010, newly appointed medical officers will be receiving a salary of RM6,000 per month as they would be promoted from UD41 grade to UD44 grade on completion of 2 years housemanship and upon confirmation in service is exaggerated and misleading. The actual UD44 salary at P1T1 is RM3,028.90 with fixed allowances of RM1,450.00 (includes critical allowance of RM750, housing allowance of RM400, *elaun khidmat awam* of RM300 and COLA RM100-300 depends on location) and although a doctor may earn up to RM6,000 by doing many active calls or working many hours doing locum, this would not be the salary of the majority of first year medical officers.

We would like to inform the public that the MMA has repeatedly requested the government to introduce a separate service scheme for government doctors, different from that of other civil servants, as doctors' undergraduate training is longer (5-6 years) compared to other professionals, our working hours are long and protracted and there is a period of five years of compulsory government service which is not a requirement for other professional in the civil service.



**DATO' DR KHOO KAH LIN**  
**PRESIDENT**

