



MEDIA STATEMENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FPMPAM - Don't blame the oversupply of doctors solely on foreign medical students

Kuala Lumpur, Thursday, 1 September 2016 - We refer to the statement from the Higher Education Minister, Datuk Seri Idris Jusoh, that placed the blame of the oversupply of doctors on the foreign medical students.

The Federation of Private Medical Practitioners' Associations, Malaysia (FPMPAM) is fully aware that there are some foreign medical schools admitting students whose academic qualifications would not have qualify them to enter a local university for courses with lesser entry requirements than medicine. Many such students gain entry through the agencies of these medical schools.

“However, a vast majority of foreign medical schools in developed economies adhere strictly to high academic qualifications and aptitude assessments of the applicants” Says Dr Milton Lum, Past President of the FPMPAM.

“Furthermore, one should also consider how fast medical schools have sprung up within Malaysia over the past few years. Until the year 2000, there were 11 local medical schools – six public and five private entities. Today, there are 32 medical schools – 11 public and 21 private. This compares with 17 and 20 medical schools in Canada and Australia respectively, both countries with similar populations as Malaysia.” says Dr Lum. “The number of graduates from local medical schools is projected to increase from about 3,250 in 2016 to just under 4,500 in 2019, with the increase due to private medical schools. There are also claims that some private medical schools take in more students than permitted while there are also isolated claims that entry requirements are sometimes managed downwards. It is thus inaccurate to put the blame entirely on the foreign medical students.” Dr Lum adds.

“Some of these students who return from top-tier overseas institutions end up as specialists and industry leaders and experts, whose overseas training benefits the medical community in Malaysia” says Dr Steven Chow, President of the FPMPAM. “Presently, there is still denial regarding the problem of over-production which stems from both external and local medical schools. There seems to be little political will to address this overproduction” Dr Chow adds.



“There are about 37,000 beds in the MOH hospitals. Based on the ratio of one medical student to five hospital beds, the MOH hospitals can only cater for about 7,400 medical students in their clinical years. Yet in 2014, there were about 10,000 such students - a mismatch that inevitably impacts on the quality of training” says Dr Lum.

This mismatch is likely to worsen in the next five years and beyond. With the marked increase in the number of provisional registrations and the inability of some doctors to complete their training in two years, a backlog has resulted, with a waiting time of six or more months for houseman posts. The backlog will impact significantly on a young doctor’s skills, knowledge and attitude, as well as financially, for many.

“The government has started to look into solving this but the current measures do not address the basic issue of overproduction. We urge the government to take a more cohesive and concerted effort, between all relevant agencies, including the MOE, the MOH and the MMC” adds Dr Chow.

In August 2016, the FPMPAM called for the government to encourage newly graduated doctors to work as clinic assistants in private clinics while waiting for housemen placements. This would enable them to mentor under senior practitioners and keep in touch with medicine while waiting for their posting.

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About The Federation of Private Medical Practitioners’ Association Malaysia

(FPMPAM)

The FPMPAM is the national body representing doctors in private practice in Malaysia. FPMPAM is committed to improve the quality of private health care through continuing medical education, continuing professional development of its members, ethics advocacy and public outreach programs. Founded in 1989, it consists of seven state-level associations and has over 5,000 members. For more information on the FPMPAM, please visit <http://fpmpam.org> or <https://www.facebook.com/fpmpam>.

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