Press Statement

“A Response to the Continuation of JPA Scholarship for Medical-Related Programmes”

12th June 2023 - In response to the statements made by Prime Minister Datuk Ser Anwar Ibrahim and Health Minister Dr Zaliha Mustafa regarding the decision to resume the provision of JPA scholarships for medical-related programmes, Malaysian Medics International (MMI) wishes to express our support and heartfelt gratitude to the Ministry of Health (MoH) and Public Service Department (PSD), or better known as Jabatan Perkhidmatan Awam (JPA), for taking the concerns of the rakyat into consideration.

We applaud the government’s decision to prioritise the education of future healthcare professionals as the healthcare industry is an essential aspect of our society. The investment in the education of healthcare professionals is crucial for the well-being of our nation and it will yield significant benefits for our society in the long run. Thus, we humbly call upon the Ministry of Health and the Public Service Department to consider the following:

1. Review existing publication on human resources for health
   The clarification provided in response to the initial decision regarding the discontinuation of JPA Scholarships for medical-related programmes was due to the projections of an oversupply of medical officers from 2026 – 2030, as stipulated in the ‘Supply and Needs-Based Requirement Projections of Malaysia Human Resources for Health Using System Dynamics Approach 2016-2030’ study which was published in 2019.1 However, the intentions to reallocate resources to other sectors will come at the cost of the healthcare system, which has undergone significant transformations since the COVID-19 pandemic. The initial decision failed to acknowledge the nationwide reduction in healthcare professionals in both major and district hospitals and public health clinics in recent years.2 Therefore, the commitment of the government in safeguarding the sustainability of the healthcare system by taking obligatory steps to support individuals keen on pursuing medical-related programmes is well-received and celebrated.2,3 With the best interests of the Malaysian healthcare system and its vital components – the healthcare professionals – in mind, MMI stands in full support of this decision and calls upon the Ministry of Health to conduct a thorough and comprehensive review on the existing publication on human resources for health.
2. **Provide a compensatory solution for JPA scholarship applicants**

MMI calls upon the PSD to consider a compensatory solution for the initial decision of discontinuing scholarships for medical-related programmes that potentially dissuaded interested applicants. Despite revoking the decision, there were no indications of allowing interested applicants to apply for JPA Scholarships for medical-related programmes, as the application deadline remained steadfast on April 2nd, 2023. Securing a scholarship to pursue medical-related programmes would have been one’s only means of funding due to personal financial constraints. Consequently, we implore the relevant authorities to reconsider their stance and enable eligible individuals to reapply for the scholarships or establish alternative portals which they can apply for relevant scholarships.

In conclusion, MMI appreciates the government’s prompt response in addressing the aforementioned issues originating from the scholarship suspension. Such measures have undoubtedly instilled a sense of reassurance and confidence in the nation as it reflects on the government’s commitment and dedication in maintaining the quality and needs of the healthcare system.

Thank you.

MALAYSIAN MEDICS INTERNATIONAL
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About Malaysian Medics International (MMI)

MMI is an international medical student-led organisation that aims to connect, educate, and cultivate. Since our inception in 2013, we have grown into a global network of more than 200 leaders from seven countries around the world. Presently, we are an active advocate for inclusivity and diversity, reform in medical education, and the welfare of our junior doctors and medical students.

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References:

