



Persatuan Pengguna Pulau Pinang Consumers Association of Penang

檳城消費人協會 பிளாங்கு பயனீட்டாளர் சங்கம்

10 Jalan Masjid Negeri, 11600 Pulau Pinang, Malaysia
Tel: 604-8299511 Fax: 604-8298109
email: consumerofpenang@gmail.com

Websites:
www.consumer.org.my

Press Release,

21 June 2019

The situation in nursing homes

The Consumers' Association of Penang (CAP) is shocked with the news that the elderly in a nursing home in Seremban, Negeri Sembilan have allegedly been systematically and continuously abused. The workers there have alleged that the elderly were forced to drink urine, eat chillies and given more sleeping pills than what was prescribed. Those who are responsible for these cruel acts should be punished severely.

How could this be allowed to happen when care centres are supposed to provide protection, supervision, rehabilitation and training?

We understand that many nursing homes are operating without being registered with the Social Welfare Department (JKM), the authority overseeing all care centres. Evidently no action is being taken against these errant nursing homes and this reflects poorly on the enforcement division of JKM. Under the Care Centre Act 1993, recognised officers have every right to enter the premises to determine the health and wellbeing of the residents.

This situation cannot continue. We live in a society where the life expectancy has increased but are still plagued by age related health problems such as diabetes, high blood pressure, dementia and much more that force the elderly to be dependent on the younger generation.

Nevertheless, the reality is that not every adult child is able to care for their aging parents. This in turn has caused the population of elderly being placed in nursing homes to increase.

The elderly in nursing homes are visited by their family members and this makes us curious as to how the family members could not notice if the elderly are abused. The answer is that the elderly themselves hide the abuse done to them.

It was stated in the article on the alleged abuse case in Seremban, the elderly hid that they were abused because they were afraid that there would be worse consequences if it was found out.

As such, there must be better laws and enforcement to protect the residents of care centres, be they elderly or otherwise, from suffering abuse at the hands of their supposed caregivers.

In March 2018 the Private Aged Healthcare Facilities and Services Act or Act 802 was published in the federal Gazette; but as of now Act 802 is not yet in force. We have yet to explore this new piece of legislation and are unclear if this will eventually govern all nursing homes or only the ones that provide medical care?

In the alleged Seremban abuse case the State Women, Family and Welfare Affairs Committee chairperson has said that enforcement action will be taken against the care centre if it is found to have circumvented the law. But we cannot indulge in naivety and complacency by convincing ourselves that this is just an

isolated incident. If abuse can take place in one nursing home it can happen in any nursing home across the country.

CAP asks that JKM take proactive measure to conduct scheduled spot-checks (if not already being done) at all premises that claim to be nursing homes, even if there are no complaints.

Mohideen Abdul Kader
Acting President
Consumers Association of Penang (CAP)