



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 Statement

27 September 2017

Proposed Pharmacy Bill – Unjustified

The Consumers Association of Penang is disappointed at the Ministry of Health's decision not to separate the roles of dispensing and prescribing. Cleared the Ministry of Health has bowed down to the pressure of the powerful medical lobby in refusing to create a system of separation of duties in prescription and dispensing. Separation of dispensing and prescribing is the norm in developed countries. It is most ironic that a nation aspiring to attain high-income status by 2020 takes a retrogressive stand in healthcare practices.

It is completely unjustifiable to say that this is to cater to the needs of patients especially in rural areas. Countries like India and Indonesia with large rural populations have long practised separation of dispensing and prescribing with no issues. It is the universal norm that doctors diagnose and prescribe while pharmacists audit and dispense. To make a policy decision and legislate against this universal practice is absolutely mind-boggling and unfair. On what basis does the Ministry of Health deny a profession of its fundamental role?

What should be of paramount importance to the Ministry of Health as custodians of public health is medication safety - which has been identified by leading health organisations like World Health Organisation, US Food and Drug Safety and UK's National Health Safety as the main priority in addressing patient safety challenges.

A 2007 US Institute of Medicine report showed that medication errors originate most often during the medication prescribing process. At least half of these prescribing errors are detected and corrected when pharmacists review the safety and appropriateness of the medication. Having the same doctor prescribe and dispense as in Malaysia eliminates that safety net.

Standards of general practice in Malaysia are still not up to international mark. We still have doctors not labelling their medications and giving patients just a plastic envelope with some pills in it. It is also common practice that the staff handling medications is not trained for the job. Hence there is no check for the safety and appropriateness of the prescription and any potential-medication related problems. **This should be the primary concern of the Ministry of Health.**

CAP urges the Attorney-General to reject this bill as it contravenes the basic principle of medication safety.

S. M. Mohamed Idris
President
Consumers Association of Penang