



Persatuan Pengguna Pulau Pinang Consumers Association of Penang

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Press Statement

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REGULATE FEES ON ORTHODONTIC TREATMENTS High cost of dental brace placement lead people to fake solutions

The Consumers Association of Penang (CAP) is shocked with recent reports in the media of fake dentists offering illegal orthodontic or dental brace placement services resulting in severe health consequences for the patients. Consumers utilising such services risk HIV and Hepatitis infections, tooth decay and gum disease. These fake service and procedures are done by unqualified persons at a fraction of the normal price. Consumers are lured to these services by the affordable price. CAP is of the view that the high cost of orthodontic procedures is one of the key factors leading consumers to seek illegal treatment.

The cost of dental brace placement can be anywhere between RM3000.00 – RM4000.00. This fee is not displayed on a board so that potential patients/customer can make informed decisions before deciding to get treatment done at their dental clinic. They are often told of the full price after treatment has started. In June 2000, CAP highlighted this issue in the Utusan Konsumer. Even then private dentists were charging steep prices and not displaying their fees on a board.

Fast forward 16 years to 2016 and things have not changed. The only difference now is that we have the Schedule 13, Private Healthcare Facilities & Services (Private Hospitals and Other Private Healthcare Facilities) (Amendment) Order, 2013 which regulates the fees of basic dental services. Despite Schedule 13, private dental clinics are still not required to display the fees for their consultation and procedures and orthodontic treatment or dental brace placement is not covered under this schedule.

The only item regulated is the consultation fees and the fees for basic dental procedures. Even then, the range given for the fees of certain basic procedures is just too wide. For instance the fee range for the treatment “dentures acrylic (full) per jaw” (as stated in the 13th Schedule) is RM285.00 – RM2290.00. This is why consumers are so easily duped by fake dentists into wasting their money and endangering their lives.

These are trying times and whether consumers are catering to their vanity, giving in to peer pressure or have been told by a dentist that they actually need braces to correct an oral health complication, it is still going to cost them a hefty sum. So they look for the cheapest solution, not knowing that it will probably cost them more in the long run, financially and health wise.

Ultimately it is the onus of the relevant authorities to ensure that people do not get into these situations. If a procedure like applying dental braces was regulated and the fees for the procedure displayed on a board in dental clinics, then dentist would not be left to arbitrarily (over)charge their patients and people would know that anything below a certain price should not be trusted.

For that reason, CAP calls on the government to amend the previously amended 13th Schedule – Schedule 13, Private Healthcare Facilities & Services (Private Hospitals and Other Private Healthcare Facilities) (Amendment) Order, 2013 so that:-

- The fees for all the procedures (basic or specialised) are regulated
- To make it a requirement for private dental clinics to display their fees on a board in the clinic
- To ensure that the range for fees of any procedure is not unreasonably wide. Only then will the dental industry be treating their customers fairly

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