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PRESS STATEMENT ON COMPULSORY MEDICAL TESTS FOR COMMERCIAL VEHICLE DRIVERS

The Malaysian Medical Association is surprised that the JPJ has come out with a compulsory medical examination for commercial vehicle drivers in such a short time. We are not sure if the procedure has been thought out well enough. The MMA is disappointed that we were not consulted as we had done studies and implemented the previous medical check-up requirement for drivers a few years ago.

The MMA had long been involved in this important road safety issue. We have worked with the regulatory agencies to ensure that serious illnesses that may afflict commercial drivers are screened before the issuance of license and also for annual renewal. We had verified that in the U.K. and some other countries, the national medical associations have appropriate technical advisers for this medical examination. We have even obtained samples of detailed forms for specific illnesses and accordingly offered our expert services to the concessionaires.

Part of the rationale put forth for the revision of the present system is the alleged falsification of medical certification. There maybe unscrupulous touts who have forged signatures and fake clinic stamps. These crooks maybe selling these falsified forms to drivers who are unfit or who do not want to be examined. However, this should not be the reason to impose another additional surcharge, which incurs higher costs for the client and community. The MMA is willing to work with the relevant agencies to improve the system to ensure that this kind of potentially fatal fraud is eliminated.

The MMA was also responsible for initiating the study and survey of medical status of drivers as a prelude to establishing an annual standard examination. This was much appreciated by the Ministry of Transport and the implementation of the procedure has been recorded in official meetings.

The focus of any intervention must be the maintenance of standards and improvement of the process. The insertion of a third party in this process may have a negative impact on public road safety while increasing cost. The policy makers and other stakeholders must engage in open and direct discussion to explore the issues involved if there is to be any suggestion of change.

We feel that the selection of panel clinics should be transparent and the clinics ought to be paid appropriately so that proper medical examination can be carried out. As we have stated before, the MMA supports medical tests for all commercial vehicle drivers but we must ensure that it fulfills the requirements and not done for the sake of doing it.

All doctors in the country are registered with the Malaysian Medical Council (MMC) and therefore, there is no need for middle person to register doctors again and to create a panel for this. Any driver can go to any doctor wherever he is. The medical examination and drug screening can be done by all doctors

The Minister of Transport should be aware this is an unnecessary move involving a middleman and would cause inconveniences to all commercial vehicle drivers. The MMA hopes the Minister will give serious attention to this issue.



BY : DATO' DR KHOO KAH LIN
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