

Only six MCOs have signed up with Health Ministry

PETALING JAYA: Only six of the 56 managed care organisations (MCOs) had registered with the Health Ministry when the deadline expired on March 31.

“Doctors can only deal with registered MCOs. It is wrong for them to deal with those that have yet to register,” Health Ministry director-general Tan Sri Dr Ismail Merican said Thursday. Dr Ismail said the ministry was considering making the names of the registered MCOs public so that people would know whether the companies they have signed up with are authorised by the ministry to carry out dealings.

“Private healthcare facilities can only deal with those who are registered,” he warned.

He said the ministry was concerned over the number of MCOs, which had yet to register as it would be unable to resolve issues raised by parties affected by the dealings.

Under the Private Healthcare Facilities and Services Act, a MCO is defined as any organisation or body with whom a private healthcare facility or service provider has an arrangement or contract to provide healthcare services within an agreed financing system.

He said all MCOs would be licensed under the Act so it would be able to regulate their activities in their dealings with private healthcare facilities or service providers.

Dr Ismail also said in a statement that “fee splitting” was prohibited under the Private Healthcare Facilities and Services Regulations 2006 and the Malaysian Medical Council’s code of professional conduct.

“Discount for professional fees is not allowed because it would be infringing on the regulations and the code. However, discounts are allowed for administrative fees,” he said.

If “fee splitting” is carried out for professional fees, the practitioner is subject to disciplinary punishment under the Medical Act.

The issue of “fee splitting” is being hotly debated between the Joint Inter-Hospital Healthcare Committee (JIHC) and ING Insurance Bhd.

The JIHC is claiming that ING “refused to budge from its proposed terms and conditions in their new Healthcare Service Panel Agreement (HSPA)” where it was in breach of the Act and compromising quality of healthcare.

ING, however said that its proposed fees are within the Act Thirteen Schedule (2006).