



# MC watch



## Plan to monitor medical absenteeism through a **central repository database**

**PETALING JAYA:** To curtail medical absenteeism which is causing employers to lose billions of ringgit a year, various authorities and the Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF) will be studying the idea of setting up a Central Repository Database (CRD) to monitor employee absenteeism.

If the concept is found to be viable, all employers will be required to report to CRD each time an employee takes medical leave (MC) with particulars of the staff and the doctor concerned provided.

The proposed CRD system will keep track of the number of MCs an employee has taken in a year, while providing details of the

issuing doctor and clinic.

Data collated from the CRD system will help the authorities detect and track if MCs were:

- for genuine or undeserving cases;
- by any unregistered clinics;
- fake and if a syndicate was involved; or
- to bridge gaps between weekends and public holidays so that an employee enjoyed a longer break from work.

Perhaps, if data for big football matches like the World Cup or the European Championship are fed into the system, it may be able to map the rampant “coincidence” of employees taking MCs the

# Huge impact on costs and productivity

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morning after late night big matches, as many employers have found to be a costly phenomenon.

*theSun* had in February highlighted that employees taking MCs were causing employers to lose a whopping RM2.9 billion a year in overtime payments to workers replacing those on medical leave. An additional RM1.92 billion in wages was paid to workers who were on MC and did not work besides paying about RM3.3 billion to settle their medical bills.

The media had also reported on employees who fake sickness to obtain MCs, and MC-for-sale rackets by syndicates as well as some unscrupulous doctors.

For now, there is no database to monitor the issue of absenteeism and how serious it is in Malaysia, but if the CRD proposal gets the thumbs-up from all quarters, including from relevant government ministries, it may well be the first of its kind not only in the region, but probably the world.

Officials from MEF, Human Resources Ministry, Social Security Organisation (Socso), Malaysian Medical Association (MMA), Medico Legal Society of Malaysia,

Academy of Occupational and Environmental Medicine Malaysia, Malaysian Productivity Council, and corporate CEOs and human resource directors are expected to discuss this at a seminar on “Medical Absenteeism – Whose Responsibility?” to be held here on June 17.

“Employees taking MCs have a huge impact on productivity and undeserving MCs affect the companies and the national economy,” said Eximius Medical Administration Solutions Sdn Bhd managing director Dr Kamalanathan Sappani, who is the co-organising chairman of the seminar.

“The rampant abuse of MCs poses a lot of problems in workplaces and there is a need for doctors, employers, employees and the HR community to work out how to deal with this absenteeism issue.

He said a template for CRD is ready and can be activated and managed by a private body, the Health Ministry or Human Resources Ministry within six months.

If CRD is implemented, the government may draw up a set of guidelines on the issuance of MCs for the 13 million workers, both in the public and private sectors.