

## The Star : New packing won't cause surge in prices

Written by Administrator

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OF late, the issue of patient-dispensing packs has stirred the interest of those in the healthcare industry as well as the general public and it is not difficult to understand why. In Malaysia, there are misconceptions surrounding the issue based on several comments that appeared in the press last week. As such, the Malaysian Organisation of Pharmaceutical Industries (MOPI) would like to appeal to all stakeholders not to resort to making premature assumptions about the patient-dispensing packs implementation process. The details are still being worked out and yet to be finalised and all stakeholders in the related industries such as Malaysian Medical Association (MMA), Malaysian Pharmaceutical Society (MPS), Pharmaceutical Association of Malaysia (PhAMA) and especially consumer associations representatives will be consulted at various stages of the project's development to assist in the setting of the course, direction and scope for the proposed implementation. Patient-dispensing packs are not altogether new. All local pharmaceutical manufacturers have been using such packaging on a voluntary basis for a few years now. A survey conducted early this year by MOPI indicated that more than 50% of the products used in the country have already been packed in patient-dispensing packs. Many medical practitioners have already begun to appreciate the advantages of this packaging in the practices that improves patients safety and efficacy. By now, the number of those in this group can only be much higher. Since 50% of the market is already using patient-dispensing packs and as there have been no reports of any significant pricing differentiation, the public should not be burdened with a sudden surge in medicine prices when such packs are fully implemented. In this sense, the fear of medicine costs rising indiscriminately or similar claims made thereof are not justifiable. The benefits of using patient-dispensing packs are multi-faceted and have been covered in great detail by the letter from the Director of Pharmaceutical Services (*The Star*, Sept 20). Under the circumstances, it would be sufficient to say that the advantages of its implementation will more than outweigh the resultant adjustment in costs and prices, if it is at all significant. However, on the issue of the usage of holograms, MOPI will channel its views and opinions to the appropriate sources so that in-depth discussions can be held in relation to its usage and other matters of relevance. On our part, we would like to emphasise that MOPI, as the custodian of generic pharmaceutical products and co-agents in the programme, will continue to work for the greater good of all parties who will be affected by this exercise and will remain conscientious about what needs to be done, driven by our understanding of the benefits to the general public that will be created with its introduction. Over the years, one of MOPI's main objectives has been to consistently seek ways to contain healthcare costs, making pharmaceutical products accessible and affordable and we will continue to do so, moving forward.

**JIMMY PIONG, President, Malaysian Organisation of Pharmaceutical Industries.**