

# MAC

# says no

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## Marina has doubts about Johor's compulsory pre-marital HIV test

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By S. Gayathri

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PETALING JAYA, Tues: The Malaysian AIDS Council (MAC) and the Malaysian Medical Association are saying no to Johor's mandatory pre-marital HIV test for Muslim couples.

The MAC's reasons are:

- adequacy of the three-month window period:
  - accuracy of the rapid test; and
  - readiness of health workers to conduct such tests and counsel those found positive.

Its president Datuk Paduka Marina Mahathir is disappointed that the state insists on going ahead with pre-marital HIV testing from Nov 13, which is World AIDS Day

The MMA said that a patient's

consent is still needed even if the test is compulsory

No consent is valid if obtained under coercion, threat or force and when the patient giving consent is unaware of the full implications, it said in a statement (see **Page 2**).

In announcing the date on Sunday, Mentri Besar Datuk Abdul Ghani Othman said anyone wishing to marry a Johor Muslim has to take the test irrespective of whether he or she is from another state.

Marina said the MAC had an excellent meeting with the relevant authorities and found they shared the same intention in wanting to protect Malaysians from HIV/AIDS.

"However, we find, that many practical issues in the implementation of the *fatwa* have not been thought through by the Johor Health Department and this will cause the plan to fail," she said.

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