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### **FBR seeks income details of doctors, surgeons**

KARACHI: The Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) on Wednesday sought details of income of doctors and surgeons associated with Karachi's major hospitals and health institutes who are "having thriving practice but are not paying taxes on their income", leaving many practitioners in a quandary about objective behind the move.

A notification issued by the FBR addressing the commissioner inland revenue in Karachi showed a list of 30 private and public hospitals operating in the city to collect data of all health practitioners working in these facilities so their provided details would be "cross-matched" with the claims they made while filing withholding statements.

Talking to Dawn, FBR chairman Shabbar Zaidi said that notices were issued to document all professions and sectors. "We have started from Karachi in the first phase," he said, adding that under the Income Tax Ordinance people having taxable income would have to file their returns. "We will send notices to all hospitals across the country to seek information about non-filer doctors," the chairman said.

Notices issued to 30 Karachi hospitals

"During the task of identifying new taxpayers, it transpired that a large number of physicians and surgeons are registered with the Pakistan Medical and Dental Council and having thriving practice in Karachi but are not paying taxes on their income," said the FBR notification. "In order to find out new taxpayers, this office has sent notices under Section 176 to the following [names of 30 hospitals] for providing information about the doctors practicing there, their income and other related matters," it added.

The names of the health facilities identified by the FBR are: Mamji Hospital, Dow University Hospital, The Indus Hospital, National Medical Centre, Anklersaria Hospital, Ibn-e-Seena Hospital, Life Care Consultant Clinic, Karachi Adventist Hospital, Nehal Hospital, A.O. Clinic, Dar-ul-Sehat Hospital, Agha Khan University Hospital, Usmania University Hospital, Jinnah Hospital, OMI Hospital, Fatmiya Hospital, Zulekha Hospital, Mid City Hospital, Ashfaq Memorial Hospital, Habib Medical Centre, Hashmanis Hospital, Saifee Hospital, Healthcare Hospital, Park Lane Hospital, Liaquat National Hospital, Taj Medical Complex, Ziauddin Medical Centre Hospital and SIUT.

A senior Sindh health official said that he had "just heard" about the FBR move but not sure about its target professionals and exact objective. He said the doctors and surgeons associated with both public and private facilities paid tax on their income regularly and in most of the organisations it was deducted at-force while paying salaries to them.

A senior member of the Pakistan Medical Association, when contacted, avoided commenting on the issue, saying the body or professionals associated with it had not yet received any such request or warning from the FBR so it was not appropriate to discuss this at this point of time.