GOMBAK — Who would have thought buying sick leave slips, including backdated ones, would be as easy as buying bus tickets?

Klinik Rakyat in Taman Selayang Jaya near Batu Caves sold two medical slips (MCs) to our reporters without them even entering the premises.

Our visit there followed a tip-off from a reader who claimed the clinic has been churning out MCs for more than a decade.

The MCs were sold at prices ranging from RM20 to RM40 per day (see price list). "Patients" were even allowed to backdate or postpone their MCs.

Piquing interest, our reporters visited the clinic last week. Although the "Open" sign hung behind the glass door, the doctors were locked. Our reporters rang the doorbell and was attended to by a man who took down his particulars and documented them in an exercise book before issuing the MC.

The whole transaction took place along the corridor of the clinic within minutes.

We sent another reporter to the same clinic days later and he, too, managed to obtain an MC without any hassle. Our reporter was also assured the clinic would answer any queries from his fictitious company.

We called the clinic to obtain confirmation of whether our reporters had visited.

A lady answered the phone and upon obtaining our reporter's name and identification number, confirmed his visit.

"Yes, he met the doctor as he had high fever," she said.

On both occasions, our reporters tried to buy medicine from the counter without prescriptions but were directed to a nearby pharmacy instead.

Both MCs had the same doctor's name, Dr Sabil'Isam, stamped with a signature above it. A quick check showed Dr Sabil'Isam and Klinik Rakyat are registered with the Malaysian Medical Council (MMC). Efforts to speak to the doctor, however, proved futile.

A spokesman from the MMC said investigations will be conducted after receiving a complaint from the public.

"If the claims are true, the clinic will be referred to the council's ethics committee. There, they could be given a warning, a fine or, ultimately, have their licence revoked due to unethical code of conduct," he said.

The subject of MCs being abused was highlighted by Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr S. Subramaniam on May 9. He had then said stern action would be taken against medical practitioners guilty of selling MCs.

"If proven, they can not only be fined but their licence can also be revoked and they can no longer work as doctors in Malaysia," he said.

Dr Subramaniam also said such unethical practice smeared the image of the profession.

The Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC), had on its website the following day, issued a statement saying medical practitioners who sell MCs to the public can be referred to the disciplinary committee of the MMC.

The statement, signed off by MACC investigation director commissioner Datuk Mustafa Ali, said that under Section 16 of the MACC Act 2009, anyone who gives patients, accounts or documents (including MCs) to his/her principal (superior) with the intention of misleading him/her, and if the principal has reason to believe that the statement in those documents are false, is considered guilty.

MACC is authorized to investigate these individuals, considering it involves financial and forgery elements, and in the process benefiting him or herself," he said.

"MACC hopes the Health Ministry and department, or any other party with evidence or proof of this activity, would contact us for immediate action."