

Business Times

Malaysia to review fees of doctors, private hospitals

By Presenna Nambiar
presenna@nstp.com.my
2010/11/23

THE government will review the fees of doctors and private hospitals soon and set up more ambulatory (out-patient) care centres as a means to address the issue of expensive private healthcare.

Health Minister Datuk Seri Liow Tiong Lai has also instructed the ministry's director general Tan Sri Dr Ismail Merican to meet with private hospital owners to discuss ways to curb the rising cost of private healthcare.

The government will review the professional fees for doctors by the year-end, Liow said at the launch of iHeal Medical Centre in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

It will then review private hospital charges, he added.

The ministry will also look at the kind of medication being distributed by private hospitals and consumables such as tissues. The ministry under the Tenth Malaysian Plan will set up six more ambulatory care centres. Currently there are 15 government-run ambulatory centres.

"We will focus on growing the number of ambulatory centres, so that we can cut down on in-patient care and therefore reduce the cost of care for patients," Liow said.

The high cost of care in private facilities is generally associated with in-patient care.

To-date the government has received 51 applications to operate ambulatory care centres and so far 31 have been licensed and are operational. These centres are regulated under the Private Healthcare Facilities and Services Regulations 2006. Meanwhile, Lembaga Tabung Amanah Negeri Terengganu, Biomedical Technologies Sdn Bhd and a medical doctor, have come together to set up the country's first ambulatory centre in a shopping mall.

Situated in MidValley Megamall in Kuala Lumpur, the RM28 million iHeal Medical Centre was launched by Yang Di-Pertuan Agong Tuanku Mizan Zainal Abidin.

The Terengganu State Development Fund owns a 60 per cent stake in the facility. iHeal Medical Centre has a written a transfer agreement with Prince Court Medical Centre.

The facility aims to generate sales of RM10 million in 2011.