

CNS1511

U GE 12-08 00174 EG383

aae tbe

Mahathir-health

MAHATHIR CALLS FOR PREVENTIVE HEALTH PROGRAMMES

bm

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 12 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister ⁹² Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today called on public and private hospitals to implement preventive health programmes as a community extension service.

A portion of the profits of the private hospitals, groups of medical practitioners and clinics could be allocated for the programmes, he said when launching the third Heart Week organised by the Malaysian Heart Foundation, here.

Philanthropists and corporations may contribute funds for preventive health programmes and health research studies that would be of direct benefit to the people, he said.

"It is only proper that we step up efforts to make Malaysians healthy from the physical, mental and heart aspects. The responsibility rests with all of us," he said.

The establishment of corporate health promotion and wellness programmes would have value to both the employees and the employers and also to the nation, he said. -- more

AZZ MGN

▼12/08/16-37MST

U GE 12-08 00159 EG384

aae tbe

Mahathir-health 2 Kuala Lumpur

A healthy workplace should be for all and not to a group of people committed to their own wellness, he said.

It involved the integration of the functions of traditionally separate departments, including occupational health and safety, human resource development, communications, employee benefits and public relations, he said.

The concepts extend to managing the workforce for wellness by creating a corporate culture based on the belief that concern for the health of individual employees provides a competitive edge in this evolving, complex, global market place of today and tomorrow, the year 2020 and beyond, he said.

Dr Mahathir said government expenditure and the people's liabilities could be reduced with preventive measures, for example, in the case of cardiovascular diseases.

"It is important to adhere to a healthy lifestyle to reduce incidence of cardiovascular diseases," he said. -- more

AZZ MGN

▼12/08/18-44MST

aae tbe

Mahathir-health 3 Kuala Lumpur

He said a healthy lifestyle was not only confined to reducing medical costs but also cutting down on cost of living, for example by not smoking and not eating food rich in cholesterol, salt or sugar.

Dr Mahathir said the government was forced to review the cost of health maintenance which it had borne all along.

"The system of free medical treatment in Malaysia was started in the colonial days as a means to popularise Western medication," he said, explaining that medication then was limited to dispensing of very cheap medicine.

As surgery was rarely needed then and the system did not require high cost, the government's free medical treatment did not pose a financial burden and did not require transfer of funds from development projects, he said.

"The situation is very different today. Medical treatment is costly and the government is unable to maintain free treatment without having to squeeze funds meant for infrastructure facilities," he said. -- more

AZZ MGN

▼12/08/19-06MSF

aae tbe .

Mahathir-health 4 Kuala Lumpur

Therefore, the government is forced to impose a nominal fee. For cases where heavy expenditure was necessary, a reasonable charge was imposed, he said.

Dr Mahathir said that because the government was no longer able to provide free treatment, it was trying out a semi-private system for treatment of heart diseases.

"In this way, eligible government staff can still obtain specialist treatment and the public can have the benefit of treatment which is not too costly because the government assists by providing the physical facilities," he said.

He said the cost of medical treatment and surgery in Malaysia was still low, and that was why many foreigners were seeking treatment in this country.

Dr Mahathir said the National Heart Institute, which was opened last year, provided facilities for all the people, including the poor. -- more

AZZ MGN

▼12/08/19-19MSF

U GE 12-08 00089 EG387

aae tbe

Mahathir-health 5 (last) Kuala Lumpur

Dr Mahathir said he was proud that the heart foundation had been active in organising such activities as the Heart Week, Healthy Heart Exhibition and medical forums to educate the people on the prevention of heart diseases.

He congratulated the foundation for having set up a fund to finance pre-research on heart diseases and its plan to provide a para medical service and set up a shelter home. -- Bernama

AZZ MGN