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Chua-Abortion

ABORTION:HEALTH MINISTRY SEEKS MORE POWERS

KUALA LUMPUR, April 3 (Bernama) -- The Health Ministry is seeking more powers through a proposed new legislation to enable it act against illegal abortion, its Minister Datuk Chua Jui Meng said today.

"At the moment the ministry is fairly limited in action towards offences of this nature, unless the powers are enhanced," he said.

Chua was commenting on a news report that more pregnant teenagers were resorting to abortions either done the traditional way or by medical clinics.

Earlier, Chua attended the opening of the 1st Asian International Congress On Emergency Medicine by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad here.

Chua said the Malaysian Medical Council (MMC), the body governing doctors' conduct, could only act against complaints.

"Quite often doctors themselves when confronted by law say that they have good reasons on medical conditions that required an abortion," he said.

He said the ministry believed that doctors and medical professionals were not the best people to be enforcers.

"The police for instance would be better enforcers as criminal abortion falls within the Penal Code," Chua said.

He said so far the MMC had never taken any disciplinary action against doctors for illegal abortion .

"There has been no complaint from the public. If a woman or girl does not complaint it does not happen," he said.

Chua said the ministry has no task force to carry out spot checks on premises suspected of carrying out illegal abortions or the powers to prosecute those involved.

He said under the Penal Code only the police could charge suspected performers of illegal abortions.

Meanwhile, President of the Malaysian Society of Traumatology and Emergency Medicine Dr Abu Hassan Asaari Abdullah said trained operators would man the "line 911" emergency call service due to start early next year.

He said they would be trained to provide first aid instructions during an emergency to callers before help arrives.

Dr Abu Hassan said "line 911" would be introduced in the Klang Valley area.

He also said the Kuala Lumpur Hospital would be introducing a mechanism to locate and direct the nearest ambulance to an accident scene. -- BERNAMA
NHD RN