

24 APR 1997

Hospitals

PROVIDE THIRD CLASS WARDS, PRIVATE HOSPITALS TOLD

KLANG, April 24 (Bernama) -- Private hospitals should provide third class wards for patients from the lower and middle income groups as there are demands for such wards including in non-urban areas, Health Minister Datuk Chua Jui Meng said today.

He said they should cater not only for those who could afford five-star treatment but also put aside several wards for the lower income group.

"Give them the same quality treatment that the wealthy receive while charging them less," he said when officiating the foundation stone laying ceremony of the RM70 million Sri Kota Medical Centre here.

He said a small number of the 216 private hospitals in the country had been doing so and the government would like to see more to come forward offering first class treatment but charging third-class rates for the poor.

Private hospitals should make use of the removal of the five per cent service tax, he said, adding that more tax incentives were being planned for them to encourage the setting up of third class wards.

Speaking to reporters later, Chua said the Health Ministry had decided on the full-scale implementation of ISO 9000 quality management system targetting that by early 1999 the whole ministry would have achieved the International Standard Organisation certification.

He said the first phase of the implementation would be launched next month and 81 departments had been identified for the purpose, with the target date for certification being the middle of next year.

"This includes all the divisions in the Ministry of Health and selected institutions, hospitals, state health offices, district health offices and health centres throughout the country," he said.

All other departments in the ministry would be implementing the ISO 9000 quality system beginning August to achieve the certification by early 1999.

He said the decision to go full scale towards achieving the ISO 9000 certification was in line with Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's vision that the civil service in Malaysia implement the international standards.

"Once we achieve that by early 1999, we will lead in the world to become the centre of excellence for health and medical services," he said, adding that the Engineering Services Division of the ministry had already been awarded the quality system registration certificate by Sirim Berhad.

The Engineering Services Division was awarded the quality system registration certificate for three areas -- Management of the Provision of Hospital Engineering; Environmental Health Engineering; and Radiation Health and Safety Services -- on March 24.

Chua said it became the second body in the civil service to get the ISO 9000 certification after the Hidrology Unit of the Drainage and Irrigation Department. -- BERNAMA

MNY RM