

04/11/1999

Government looking into ways to tackle rising health care costs

PETALING JAYA, Wed. - The Government is looking into solutions to tackle the rising costs of health care, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

He said proposals from medical practitioners, including the Malaysian Medical Association to improve health care system would be considered.

Dr Mahathir said when the Government tried to improve the service by proposing privatisation, it was turned into a political issue.

"When it was made into a political issue, we being good politicians knew when to back off."

The Prime Minister was speaking at the MMA dinner at Sunway Lagoon Resort Hotel tonight.

Dr Mahathir said MMA's proposal for doctors in the public sector to do limited private practice would also be studied.

"I am not making any promises, but the proposal will be studied cautiously," he said.

Earlier, MMA president Dr P. Krishnan said the association believed that if the proposal to limit private practice was implemented, it would help to retain senior staff in the public sector.

He also presented a copy of MMA's National Health Policy to the Prime Minister. MMA also awarded Dr Mahathir a Gold Medal for his contribution towards the country's development.

The Prime Minister said he understood problems faced by government doctors especially those which concerned their salary, and was appreciative of their service.

He said the Government could not match the salaries of the private sector because it could not afford to do it.

Dr Mahathir said doctors must maintain their professionalism to keep the public's trust.

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