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Government asked to intervene in move to hike medical fees

MALACCA, Tues. - The Government and Health Ministry have been asked to intervene in the proposed move by the Malaysian Medical Association to increase fees by 10 per cent.

State Intellectually Disabled Children's association president Chang Jee Kee said the move would deter thousands of the less fortunate from seeking treatment at private centres and hospitals.

"Fees currently imposed by private doctors are already high and beyond the reach of the poor. Such a move will further cause financial burden to the guardians of disabled children.

"The hardest hit will be the needy ones," he said.

MMA had recently said the increase was justified as many doctors could not make ends meet at present.

Its president, Dr Lee Yan San, had said that rental and staff salaries had gone up by more than 100 per cent due to the economic situation.

However, Dr Lee said doctors would continue to give discounts to deserving patients, such as those suffering debilitating illnesses, despite the increase.

He had said that even commonly used items like cotton wool, syringes and other disposable items, paper and printed materials had risen many times mainly due to the higher foreign exchange rate.

Dr Lee had also said that in comparison with other countries, medical fees in Malaysia were still low because consultation fees had hardly increased over the past 20 years.

Chang said many disabled children who sought treatment at government hospitals had to be referred to private specialists and consultants.

"The proposal is unfair and cruel. We must never allow intellectually disabled children to live with their maladies untreated.

"The Government, under the able leadership of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, must step in to stop such a hike from coming into effect."

Chang added that in a caring Malaysian society, private hospitals and centres must serve the society and not impose exorbitant charges.

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