

# 'Check-ups not meant to penalise staff'

SUN 31 DEC 2001

**PETALING JAYA, Sun:** Cuepacs clarified today that its proposal to make medical checks mandatory for government servants on reaching the age of 40 is merely to cater to their health and well-being.

The move is not meant to penalise them when they are diagnosed unhealthy, but just to ensure they remain healthy.

"It is to cater to those who are afraid to go for medical check-ups and help them monitor their health," Cuepacs president Datuk S. Siva Subramaniam told *The Sun*.

He was commenting on Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's

statement that Cuepacs must make its proposal clearer.

Mahathir had also queried whether those found to be unhealthy will be allowed to continue working.

Siva said Cuepacs will work on the proposal and submit a proper document to the government next week.

The Federation of Malaysian Consumer Associations (Fomca) and Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) today welcomed Cuepacs' proposal.

MMA president Datuk Dr N. Athimulam said Cuepacs needs to specify the type of medical exami-

nations it is referring to for female and male staff.

"We support the proposal, provided it does not put financial constraints on the government.

"As it is, there is a shortage of manpower in public healthcare facilities," Athimulam said.

In addition, he said, medical checks and treatment are also being provided free by these facilities for all government servants, even after their retirement.

Athimulam said that every individual must take good care of their health by exercising regularly and maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

He advised female staff

to have regular pap smears which are provided free of charge by government hospitals.

"There are also many health-related groups such as family planning association, Malaysian AIDS Council and the Malaysian Heart Association.

"They (the associations) must be invited regularly to give lectures to government servants on how to maintain good health," he said.

Athimulam added that the MMA is willing to provide services and hold dialogues with the Health Ministry and Cuepacs on the matter.

Fomca president Prof Datuk Hamdan Adnan sup-

ports the proposal as the aim is to maintain a healthy workforce, but he questioned why the check-ups should only be made mandatory at 40.

"It may too late at that stage. We can see now even the young ones are suffering from major diseases. Why not have it once every five years, or annually?" Hamdan said.

He added that the frequency of such checks must take into account the types of job performed by the government servants.

Citing an example, he said police or army personnel will need to undergo medical check-ups more regularly as their duties

require them to be fit at all times, while those in clerical and administrative jobs may need less frequent checks.