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Mental Health

MENTAL HEALTH BILL TO BE TABLED AT THE NEXT SESSION OF PARLIAMENT

KUALA LUMPUR, April 26 (Bernama) -- The Mental Health Bill which will supersede the Mental Disorders Ordinance 1952 is scheduled to be tabled at the next session of parliament, Health Minister Datuk Chua Jui Meng said today.

He said that the final draft of the Bill, drawn up since 1994, had been approved by the Attorney-General's Chambers and the Director-General of Health and was in the final stage of scrutiny and adjustment.

"The Bill is...undergoing final touches before being tabled before the Cabinet for approval," he told reporters after sending off Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad at the Royal Malaysian Air Force (RMAF) base in Subang near here.

Dr Mahathir has left for Dubai for a two-day working visit to the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

Chua said that the Bill could not be tabled at the current session of parliament as there were various legal implications to be dealt.

As such, he said, another scrutiny was conducted before it could be referred to the Cabinet, sometime soon, for approval and tabling at the next session of parliament.

Chua said that when the Bill was approved, it would provide for better rehabilitation treatment to be provided to mental patients with the involvement of society.

He said that family members of mental patients would be included in the treatment and care of mental patients as at present there were effective medications available to treat mental patients.

"We have now approved second generation drugs and these are very effective in the maintenance of mental patients but in serious cases the patients will still have to be placed in the institutions," he said.

The minister said that at present there were four mental hospitals in the country, in Tanjung Rambutan (Perak), Tampoi (Johor), Sentosa (Kuching) and Bukit Padang (Sabah), providing a total of 5,210 beds, and complemented by 22 other government hospitals which had psychiatrists in attendance.

Another mental hospital is under construction in Sungai Petani (Kedah) while new building blocks are being constructed at the site of the Hospital Permai in Tampoi.

-- BERNAMA

AT AHH RM