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Costly medical bills hurt those earning RM600 and above

KLANG, Sun. - The Health Ministry acknowledges that those earning more than RM600 a month are likely to face problems in paying costly medical bills to treat chronic diseases.

At present, only those who earn RM600 a month and below are entitled to receive financial assistance from the Chronic Disease Fund.

Health Minister Datuk Chua Jui Meng said he could not comment further on this issue before the Finance Ministry released a detailed guideline on the deployment of money under the fund.

"You (reporters) have to be patient as the RM100 million fund was only announced last Friday by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad when he tabled the Budget 2003," he said.

Chua said the fund was to help the low-income group who needed immediate financial assistance to treat chronic diseases.

On the allocation of RM7.55 billion to improve the health facilities next year, Chua said this was in line with the Government's intention to promote the country as a health tourism destination.

He said all 70 government hospitals would be upgraded to smart hospitals.