

20 SEP 2002  
Budget-Health/BM  
20 PERCENT JUMP IN HEALTH ALLOCATION

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 20 (Bernama) -- The government is allocating RM7.55 billion for next year to continue upgrading the standard and quality of medical services and public health.

This represented an increase of nearly 20 percent over this year's allocation, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said when tabling the 2003 Budget in the Dewan Rakyat today.

Of this, RM5.76 billion is for operating expenditure and RM1.79 billion for development expenditure.

"Several new projects will be implemented, including the construction of 25 new hospitals and the upgrading of 47 hospitals, 383 rural clinics and 81 health clinics," said Dr Mahathir, who is the Finance Minister.

He said among the hospitals under construction were Hospital Serdang, Alor Setar, Sungai Buloh, Ampang, Sungai Petani and Lahad Datu.

"Attention will be given to public health services to improve the health of women, children, youths, the aged and disabled, as well as to control infectious diseases and non-infectious diseases, such as diabetes, heart diseases and cancer," he said.

The close cooperation between the government and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in prevention and treatment as well as support programmes would continue to be enhanced, he said.

For next year, RM24 million is allocated to NGOs such as HOSPIS and the National Kidney Foundation.

"In addition, the government will continue to provide matching grants for NGOs which are sincere in helping the country," Dr Mahathir said.

-- BERNAMA  
SR MFJ YBY