

DAP urges setting up of PSC for 1Care proposal
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The DAP wants a parliamentary select committee (PSC) to study the 1Care for 1Malaysia scheme thoroughly before reaching a decision on its implementation.

"Parliament, the stakeholders, and the 12 million Malaysian workforce should be fully consulted in the most transparent manner before any decision is made.

"The Health Ministry and the government are morally obliged to disclose the details of the various proposals," said Bukit Bendera MP Liew Chin Tong in a press statement issued today.

He insisted that this is the only way to ensure that the people are not made to bear the burden for "private profits" under the much-criticised scheme.

Liew (left) cited a report by The Malaysian Insider which quoted a source as saying that the scheme is at a "very, very advanced" stage of planning as opposed to the Health Ministry's claim of it being still in its infancy and in the process of being 'conceptualised' to back his concern.

Yesterday, the ministry's Unit for National Health Financing (NHF) deputy director Dr Rozita Halina Hussein announcement the possibility of mandatory participation for all Malaysians to ensure equal coverage for all.

The scheme has drawn severe lashing from medical practitioners and consumers groups which alleged that the people will be made to contribute 10 percent of their household income to sustain the scheme including contribution from the government and employers.

According to Liew, the compulsory contribution is a "first attempt" after the statutory deduction of employees' income was imposed through the 1951 Employment Provident Fund (EPF) and 1969 Social Security Act (Socso).

GLC private hospitals most expensive

However, he warned that before any such scheme is implemented, "two major structural issues" must be resolved..

Penang general hospital"First, in the spate of privatisation and outsourcing in the 1990s, substantial components of the public health system such as hospital cleaning, clinical waste handling and pharmacy were outsourced to private profiteers, resulting in the ballooning of public healthcare cost," said Liew.

Secondly, he pointed out that the "most expensive" private hospitals in the country are owned by government-linked companies such Prince Court and Sime Darby Medical Centre, which are operated by petroleum giant Petronas and multinational conglomerate Sime Darby.

"While the government facilities suffer from inadequate resources and talents, hospitals owned by the GLCs which are supposedly the guardian of public wealth and assets, serve as their competitors," said Liew.

He suggested that the PSC also look into the "fundamental structural issues" in the healthcare scheme.

"The government must come clean on the controversial 1Care healthcare scheme and not continue to shroud it in secrecy," said Liew.

