

Health Ministry: Clarifications on 1Care article
MalaysiaKini.com
February 14, 2012
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We (Ministry of Health) refer to the article titled 'Ill-Feelings over 1Care in East Malaysia' printed in your portal on Feb 12, 2012.

This article unfortunately contains various inconsistencies and misleading facts on the 1Care concept. This is despite us explaining the idea clearly to the media, including a Malaysiakini representative in a briefing organised on Feb 9, 2012.

We wish to highlight the following incorrect statements:

* Paragraph 1 under Section Obligatory Contribution

One of the most provocative recommendations mooted is a new tax: an obligatory contribution of 10 percent of each household's income, to finance a National Health Insurance fund.

We had explained clearly to the media representatives present at the briefing that there has never been an idea to deduct an obligatory 10 percent tax of household income.

On the contrary, we had explained that our research indicates that households at the moment spend 9.4 percent of their income on healthcare annually. This is merely a statistic.

Yet, it is disappointing to see that your portal has once again misled its readers by publishing the above mentioned paragraph in this article, three days after the media briefing your reporter attended.

* Paragraph 4 under Section Obligatory Contribution

His director-general Dr Hasan Abdul Rahman echoed Liow's avowal that 1Care remains tentative. Dr Hasan backpedalled on the ministry's leaked announcements to stakeholders, including the Malaysian Pharmaceutical Society, that planning is in the final stages.

We had clearly explained to the media representatives at the briefing that 1Care is still at concept stage and is nowhere near its final stages.

For the record, at no point did ministry representatives inform the Malaysian Pharmaceutical Society that planning was in its final stages.

Yet, your portal continues to highlight this inconsistency with no efforts made to verify this fact with any member of the ministry.

* Paragraph 2 under Section 1 Care a Political Football

It may turn out that premier Najib Abdul Razak will attempt to portray himself as a statesman, and announce that 1Care will be postponed while studies are carried out...

We had clearly explained to the media that 1Care is at the conceptual stage and that studies are still being carried with various technical committees.

This paragraph is both misleading and malicious implying that the idea is very close to being implemented. It is not, and this was explained repeatedly to the media at the media briefing, in which a Malaysiakini reporter was present.

Besides the above, this article contained another sentence that is clearly contrary to the facts explained to the media regarding the 1Care concept.

* ...in the hope of bulldozing them all through in one frenzied legislative drive

As mentioned in the media briefing, 1 Care has been at the study stage for many years as MOH has constantly looked at ideas to improve the quality and efficiency of healthcare in Malaysia. To imply that it will be frantically made into legislation is highly malicious.

We at the Ministry of Health are very disappointed with the negative and misleading tone of reporting regarding 1 Care that exists in your portal. The above highlighted sections referred to is a clear indication of the misreporting that exists in Malaysiakini regarding this issue.

At the media briefing, your reporter was informed that our representative, Dr Nordin Saleh is ever willing to validate any facts regarding 1Care. We hope that you will contact us to verify any statements made by third parties before publishing it in your articles.

At least, allow us the right to reply as this is standard procedure in any form of ethical journalism.

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