

1Care blueprint to be ready in two years, says Liow

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The blueprint for the much-opposed revamp of the country's healthcare system, 1Care for 1Malaysia, is expected to be ready in two years, Health Minister Liow Tiong Lai said today.

He told the Dewan Rakyat that the ministry has "not even decided which model will be used", skirting around the question of how much funds would be required to set up the initiative.

NONELiow (right) said this in reply to supplementary questions posed by Sim Tong Him (DAP-Kota Melaka) asking the ministry to state all aspects of the 1Care scheme.

Sim also asked about the annual estimated expenditure and the number of patients estimated to benefit from the service and treatment, including whether it will be a joint-venture with the private sector.

Liow reiterated that the scheme was still in its infancy and the ministry was now conducting roadshows nationwide to obtain public feedback on an all-inclusive healthcare system.

The minister lashed out at opponents of the scheme, warning against manipulation of the ministry's concept paper that is being actively distributed online.

"I beg you not to twist and turn what is stated in there as it is just a working paper," said Liow when Dr Lee Boon Chye (PKR-Gopeng) interjected, waving the concept paper and asking, "Isn't this a blueprint?"

Liow also rebutted claims that a mandatory monthly deduction of 10 percent of individual incomes will be used to fund the scheme.

'To provide choice of quality healthcare'

Liow pointed that a restructured national healthcare system to public hospital funding would "provide choice of quality healthcare", ensuring universal coverage for the healthcare needs of the population based on solidarity and equity.

Supposedly modelled after Britain's National Health Service (NHS), the 1Care scheme is to replace the current two-tier healthcare system with one that integrates both private and government medical institutions, in the hope of "ensuring healthcare is accessible to all Malaysians" across the socio-economic strata.

The 1Care scheme will be managed by the National Healthcare Financing Authority (NHFA) and includes an insurance-like funding system.

At a press conference later, Liow told reporters that the proposed scheme must be studied "in total and cannot be a piecemeal (approach)".

"We are getting views from expert groups and the opposition is welcome to give its views.

"The 10 percent is based on a survey of how much we spend a year per household. We haven't come to any conclusion on the model. The suggested model earlier is a hybrid model," he added.

