

Higher medical bills after hush-hush hike by gov't
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YOURSAY 'What would really ease the rakyat's burden is an end to corruption.'

Fellow Malaysian: This hideous way of sanctioning the increase of medical consultation fees certainly runs in contrary with the federal government's recent pledges and commitment to keeping check and control on price increases.

Being medical doctors and MPs as well, Wangsa Maju MP Dr Tan Chee Keong and Sungai Siput MP Dr Jeyakumar Devaraj should question PM Najib Abdul Razak's sincerity in keeping his promises made to the people in Parliament.

Lastly, with a cap increase of RM35 to RM125 (an increase of 250 percent) for a general practitioner's (GP) first consultation fee, Jeyakumar's claim that due to a large pool of GPs around, the fees increase for GP consultation will be slight is simply not true.

Fair Play: So, the health minister used his powers without consultation - bypassing Parliament. By comparison, Selangor MB Abdul Khalid Ibrahim is a rookie for those who thought he had sold out the Selangor rakyat by **inking** the water restructuring memorandum of understanding (MOU).

Still want the powers-that-be to stay on in power for eternity? For older and old Malaysians without medical insurance coverage for a variety of reasons, higher food cost is peanuts compared with medical costs inflation.

Aryan: Legislating the private doctors' fees is not a very smart thing to do. With the implementation of the 13th Schedule (the doctors' fees schedule) in the regulations of the Private Healthcare Facilities and Services Act 1998, the Health Ministry unleashed a monster which has actually increased one aspect of the private healthcare, i.e. the doctors fees.

Before the fee schedule was implemented by law, the doctors were charging one fee for a procedure but now the surgeons especially are unbundling even a simple procedure and charging for two or more codes that are found in the schedule.

The insurance companies are not complaining because they can pass this increased fees on to their clients by increasing the premiums. Cash-paying patients are not any wiser because of their ignorance. Some doctors are actually committing fraud by unbundling a procedure to increase the cost.

Mosquitobrain: After GE13, the BN government has taken us for an endurance race. They are pushing and punishing us to the limit. The rakyat have become their punching bag, what with the government's excessive, unnecessary spending and massive plundering.

Subsidy is either reduced or totally **taken away**, causing the prices of many daily essentials to increase and spiral to many other sectors.

To add salt to injury, we have low-qualified, half-past-six lawmakers leeching off the rakyat's tax money, commenting that price increase will be minimal and should **not be a burden** to the rakyat.

James TClow: No doubt, this is a Barang Naik (BN) government. Extra taxes will not be used for the rakyat. That goes into the pockets of the corrupt.

TehTarik: To be fair, doctors fee have not been revised for the past 12 years. So the 14 to 18 percent fee raise is definitely justified.

The fees of every profession, from lawyers, accountants, engineers, IT specialists, managers, bankers, etc, have gone up by anywhere from 30 to 40 percent over the past 12 years. So what is wrong if the doctors fees are raised by 14 to 18 percent?

Do you know that clinic overheads have increased significantly over the past 10 years? This includes staff salaries, rental, equipment, electricity, etc.

Many of your average GPs are struggling to make ends meet, and would be lucky to take home an income of RM5,000 per month.

Docsarna: Tan Kee Kwong, my first question is, how long have you been out of practice? Are you aware of the many-fold increases in medicine prices in recent years?

All this while, doctors have been absorbing these increases, and how long more do you want them to be burdened?

Are not doctors rakyat too? Do you have any idea the hidden costs of running a clinic? I am not sure which age you practised medicine in, but now we have sharp bin disposals, clinical waste disposals, high rental, minimum wage, staff benefits, increasing electricity cost, etc. So are you going to pay for all this?

Sos if the minister has done this, especially following discussions with Health Ministry's director-general, there must be a reason for it.

Doctors have families too. They have mouths to feed and education isn't free either. So stop politicising this matter, when it concerns the livelihood of others.

Douglas Teoh: We need to address Docsarna's ludicrous statement. Perhaps the doctors have to have higher wages, yes, but I don't see how that logically justifies the people being charged more.

As a whole, everyone needs a pay rise. If the doctors aren't earning enough, are you suggesting that the clerks (who are earning maybe four to five times less than a doctor) are?

Also, yes, you're right, the prices of drugs are increasing constantly but why are we not criticising the government for not doing something about these increases? *Mampuslah* (Die lah) if every time the drug price increases, the doctors get higher salary. Who says that's for the better?

If the rakyat can't pay for the fees, where will the doctor's fees come from? BR1M? You need to be able to evaluate the situation as a whole, not just from a "you pay for us, is it?" perspective.

If everyone needs a pay rise to cope, it means there's something really stupid going on in the government's economic policies.

Rikk: Most times, the largest portion of a medical bill is for the private hospitals, medications, equipment used, operating theatre time, etc, and not doctors' fee.

The prices of these things have been increasing over the years, just as prices in general goods increase due to inflation, demand, etc.

Doctor's fees have remained the same for over 10 years. What would really ease the burden on the rakyat (which includes doctors too) is an end to corruption and leakage of public funds by the government.

Cinta: Medical bill includes doctor fees, pharmacy costs, equipment fees, facility fees, etc. Every item on the bill has increased over the years and that's why the medical bill is high.

It is going to be a lot higher in the near future when more regulations are implemented to monitor the practice of medicine. The Goods and Services Tax (GST) will also push the bill even higher.

Isaiah: We won't die of the sickness but from the heart attack that comes upon seeing the medical bill.

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