

# Govt needs bigger budget

## Call to double health spending

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Malaysia's current annual health budget of RM10bil is not enough and should be doubled so that the people can enjoy better healthcare.

And even after doubling the budget, the amount would still be below the World Health Organisation's recommendation of RM25bil or 5% of the country's gross domestic product, according to the Coalition Against the Privatisation of Healthcare secretary Dr D. Jeyakumar.

The coalition is a composition of 81 non-governmental organisations.

"The increase in allocation for the improvement of health facilities can come from taxation and Petronas revenue of RM50bil last year.

"It is the responsibility of the Government to ensure that all citizens and other residents have access

to safe and adequate healthcare.

"There should not be any general services tax to supplement the health budget," Dr Jeyakumar said at a recent healthcare seminar organised by Fomca at Universiti Malaya.

He said it was ironic that the Government was the largest shareholder of groups managing private hospitals.

"On one hand, the Government is in charge of building and maintaining public hospitals and, at the same time, the Government, through the Finance Ministry owns a major stake in private hospitals.

"It is not proper for the Government to have its feet in the public and private sector. More of the public can be served if the Government cuts its commitments in the private sector," Dr Jeyakumar said.

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