

Be responsible, M'sians told

The Star - 1/5/2007

Chua: Govt no guardian angel for the unhealthy

PETALING JAYA: Malaysians have to be responsible for their own health and the Government will not play guardian angel, Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Chua Soi Lek said.

"The Government cannot be a guardian angel. You have to exercise a certain amount of discipline," he said after launching the Malaysian Diabetes Association's community portal, www.diabetes.org.my, yesterday.

"You cannot fault the Govern-

ment. This is a question of behaviour, a decision that should be made by an individual," he said in response to questions on the ministry's Healthy Lifestyle campaign.

Launched in 1991, the campaign's success has been "limited."

The components of the campaign are a need for exercise, healthy eating, quitting smoking, reducing

alcohol consumption and managing stress.

Asked if the campaign was ineffective because many fast food outlets were allowed to operate at all hours, he said that "this is not a question of the Government limiting activities of an individual or business."

"Like in the matter of consuming alcohol, no one asks you to get

drunk. It does not mean that because we do not encourage alcohol consumption, outlets selling it have to be closed down. You have to choose."

Dr Chua also revealed that a recent study carried out by the Institute of Health Management showed that only 10.5% of diabetics, who underwent follow-up treatment at establishments under

the ministry, had their condition under control.

The study also showed that 6.1% of patients aged between 30 and 39 had their condition under control.

It is estimated that more than one million Malaysians have diabetes while the number of patients admitted into government hospitals due to diabetic complications had increased 100% from 21,872 in 1995 to 41,375 in 2005.