

**Malaysia's Initiatives To Promote Health Of Elderly Highlighted At Commonwealth Meeting**  
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KUALA LUMPUR, May 18 (Bernama) -- Malaysia's initiatives in promoting the health of its senior citizens were highlighted at the 27th Commonwealth Health Ministers' Meeting in Geneva, yesterday.

Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr S.Subramaniam said the initiatives included exemption on charges for outpatient and inpatient treatment for the elderly to encourage access and the use of healthcare services.

"This is also to allow the elderly to enjoy preferential treatment at public healthcare facility counters so as to shorten their waiting time substantially," he said when sharing his views on universal health care at the meeting.

The minister said the government also provided comprehensive health care services to the elderly which included health education and promotion, health screening and assessment, medical examination, consultation, home visit and homecare nursing, rehabilitation, and social, recreational and welfare activities.

"The National Health Policy for Older Persons was also introduced to ensure healthy, active and productive ageing by empowering the older persons, family and community with knowledge and skills, and by enabling the environment and providing optimal healthcare services at all levels and sectors.

"In fact, Malaysia is also in the midst of developing a regulatory law to further care for the elderly and others," he said.

Subramaniam said all the initiatives were to ensure the minimum provision of quality care for the elderly in an accessible, affordable and sustainable manner, as well as in line with the National Blue Ocean Strategy 7 (NBOS 7) and 1Malaysia Family Care concept.

He said although Malaysia had good achievements in universal health coverage, the medical and social impact of ageing was still a burden to the country.

"This is a concern to Malaysia, given the heavy burden of non-communicable diseases and the unhealthy lifestyle practised by Malaysians today," he said.

The 27th Commonwealth Health Ministers' Meeting themed 'Universal Health Coverage, with An Emphasis on Ageing and Good Health', was attended by the health ministers from Commonwealth countries to review case studies and to consult with health experts on ways to improve access to quality and affordable healthcare.

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