

## Review of hospital fees for referred patients lauded

---

**NATION**

Wednesday, 3 Oct 2018

By **Clarissa Chung**

KUALA LUMPUR: Healthcare associations have lauded the government's move to review the fee rates of patients who were referred to public hospitals from private hospitals.

Malaysian Medical Association president Dr Mohamed Namazie Ibrahim said the review is a "wise and sensible" move.

"Some patients went to see private specialists to get immediate attention but then realise that treatment is expensive and so opt to be treated in public hospitals.

Under the Fees (Medical) (Amendment) Order 2017, it is mandatory for patients from private hospitals coming to public hospitals to be charged first-class rates.

Dr Mohamed Namazie said the legislation was "ill-conceived" as it wrongly assumed that those who first sought treatment at private hospitals were well-to-do.

"Some patients would have exhausted the limit in their private insurance and so have to resort to public hospital care," he said.

He also called for the healthcare financing system to be revamped, as the private health insurance options being offered currently may not be comprehensive or suitable for all.

National Cancer Society Malaysia medical director Dr Murallitharan M. said the government would not lose out significantly in revenue collection should they review the fee rates of such patients.

This is because the total revenue collected from patient charges makes up about less than 4% of the Health Ministry's operating expenditure, he said.

He also added that there are studies to show that waiting for referrals, especially for cancer, could worsen the disease.

"So if there are patients who go to private hospitals to skip the long waiting time, why are we penalising them when they come to the public hospitals for treatment?" he said.

The Health Ministry yesterday said it is reviewing legislation that requires patients to pay high fees for treatment at public hospitals if they are referred there from private or university hospitals.

Minister Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad said the government is aware of the problem and will address the issue as soon as possible.

“We are addressing this issue because we understand that there are pertinent considerations that must be reviewed with the hope of giving fairer applicable treatment to all patients even though they come from private hospitals.

“We are very aware and we are looking into this seriously and we hope to come out with a review as soon as possible,” he told a press conference after opening the National Regulatory Conference 2018 here today.

On the toxic alcohol poisoning cases, Dr Dzulkefly said that as of Oct 1, the ministry had received a total of 98 notifications on the matter, with the dead numbering 45.

**TAGS / KEYWORDS:**

**Hospital , Fees , Review**

## **Related News**

---

**NATION** 02 Nov 2018

**Bung Moktar: Nothing new about 2019 Budget, Pakatan just copying Barisan**

**NATION** 02 Nov 2018

**Budget 2019: Health Minister happy with RM29bil allocation**

**NATION** 02 Nov 2018

**Budget 2019: Dr Maszlee on cloud nine over RM60.2bil allocation**