

MMA calls for campaigns to educate public on primary healthcare

By **Luqman Hakim** - August 16, 2022 @ 5:19pm



Healthcare spending could be utilised more effectively by shifting most of the healthcare services from tertiary and secondary over to primary care. - NSTP file pic

KUALA LUMPUR: The Health Ministry's plans to enhance primary care must also be followed with campaigns to educate the public on the role of primary care in the nation's healthcare system, Malaysian Medical Association president Dr Koh Kar Chai said.

He said healthcare spending could be utilised more effectively by shifting most of the healthcare services from tertiary and secondary over to primary care.

"It will allow preventive care to be prioritised and this is where the focus will be instead of just spending on curative care," he said.

Dr Koh described primary healthcare as the first line of defence in the healthcare system.

"Primary care practitioners also play an important role in prevention which will ultimately help save high costs for treatments.

"With emphasis on this area, health can be monitored to prevent disease or certain conditions from progressing to a chronic stage.

He also said the increase in the national health budget was essential to carry out reforms.

"The desire to have an increase in the healthcare budget from 2.85% of the GDP to 5% is essential if we are sincere about reforms to the system.

"This 5% is the bare minimum needed as we move forward in the exercise to expand our healthcare services as well as to improve the system.

Dr Koh praised the initiative made by Health Minister Khairy Jamaluddin to draw up the Health White Paper (HWP) as a way forward to achieve the changes required.

"It is needed to ensure a healthcare delivery that is seamless and accessible to all at an affordable cost and quality that catches the attention of many other countries.

The HWP is expected to be tabled in Parliament this year, with an aim of

proposing various changes needed to ensure Malaysia's healthcare system will be able to fulfil the nation's health needs.