

# Medical association backs public healthcare registration fee review, says long overdue

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KUCHING (Aug 4): The Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) supports the government's decision to review the current low public healthcare registration fees.

MMA president Dr Koh Kar Chai said the long overdue review is necessary as although the increase would likely be minimal, it would still add to the budget needed for healthcare spending.

He opined an added bonus would be the realisation that there is value to healthcare services provided by the government, instead of being almost free, which many may equate to services rendered being low in value.

He said there shouldn't be any opposition to the review as those who can't afford the registration fees would not be turned away.

"Ideally, a social health insurance scheme should be high on the agenda of the White Paper on Health.

"It is time to move away from the current heavily subsidised healthcare system, which is unsustainable.

"It should involve the whole of society in as far as funding of the healthcare system is concerned, with of course emphasis on ensuring that those in the low

income group can still avail of heavily subsidised healthcare services,” he said in a statement today.

He was responding to Health Minister Khairy Jamaluddin’s statement that Malaysia’s public healthcare system, which charges RM1 and RM5 for outpatient and specialist care respectively in Ministry of Health (MoH) facilities, is unsustainable.

Khairy said the government’s collection from the RM1 and RM5 medical fees, as stipulated under the Fees (Medical) Order 1982 and Fees (Medical) (Amendment) Order 2017, accounted for only 1 per cent of the amount spent on public healthcare.

Dr Koh pointed out after numerous calls to previous health ministers to review the low registration fees at government healthcare facilities, Khairy has seen it fit to finally bring it up.

He said no doubt it will take time for new fees to materialise due to it being included in the Health White Paper, which is slated to be presented at the end of this year, and not as a separate review.

“We had on numerous occasions years ago, highlighted the need for an increase in the fees as the quantum is just too minuscule to make a noticeable impact on the Health Ministry’s coffers.

“While fees at some of the other government departments had seen an increase over the years, registration fees for public healthcare had remained.

“Even the parking rates at many of our public healthcare facilities make the registration fees pale in comparison,” he added.