

RM2b health bill for civil servants

TRIM THE FAT:

Practising a healthy lifestyle can reduce govt's burden, says Subra

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THE government spends about RM2 billion on medicines for civil servants.

To reduce the government's healthcare burden, Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr S. Subramaniam yesterday urged the Congress of Unions of Employees in the Public and Civil Services (Cuepacs) to promote a healthy lifestyle among civil servants.

"The cost of preventing a disease is cheaper than treating someone at hospitals or clinics, and providing medication.

"We can reduce this expenditure, together with Cuepacs, by ensuring civil servants adopt a healthier lifestyle.

"There is no point in being paid well and getting bonuses, but being unable to enjoy life because our health is compromised.

"So, we have to invest in our health and practise a healthy lifestyle," Dr Subramaniam said.

He was speaking before witnessing the presentation of a kidney dialysis machine and two hi-flow nasal cannulas from insurer Sun Life Malaysia Bhd and Cuepacs to Putrajaya Hospital.

They were handed over by Sun Life Financial president and chief executive officer Dean Connor and Cuepacs president Datuk Azih Muda.

Dr Subramaniam said Putrajaya had many facilities that promoted healthy living, but they were not



Health Minister **Datuk Seri Dr S. Subramaniam** (centre) witnessing the presentation of medical equipment from Cuepacs president **Datuk Azih Muda** (second from left) to Putrajaya Hospital director **Datuk Dr Norai Mohd Said** in Putrajaya yesterday. With them are Sun Life Financial president and chief executive officer **Dean Connor** (right) and the ministry's deputy secretary-general (finance) **Datuk Mohd Shafiq Abdullah**. Pic by Ahmad Itham Mohd Noor

fully used by civil servants.

"The peak age of people starting to focus on physical activities is between 40 and 45 years old, after doctors tell them about their (health) condition.

"The message on the importance of physical activities must be raised even before doctors say it."

Speaking on another matter, Dr Subramaniam said half of Malaysians who had diabetes were unaware that they had the disease.

He said there was also an increase in the number of kidney patients.

"The latest National Health and Morbidity Survey (NHMS) showed that 17.5 per cent of those aged 18 and above, or 3.5 million people, have diabetes.

"What bothers us is that half of the people suffering from diabetes do not know they have it.

"The number of kidney failure patients seeking haemodialysis treatment in Malaysia has also increased, from 563 individuals per one million of the population in 2004 to 1,182 patients per one million of the population in 2014."

Speaking at the event, Connor said Sun Life was confident its contribution would go a long way towards strengthening health services for Malaysians.

"Sun Life is committed to slowing the advance of diabetes and its complications by aiming to improve the health and wellness of our clients, employees and the community.

"Since we announced our commitment to diabetes in 2012, we've focused our support on diabetes awareness, prevention, care and research, with more than US\$43 million (RM\$3.2 million) committed to date."