



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim launching the new block of the Seberang Jaya Hospital in Butterworth yesterday. With him are (from left) Entrepreneur Development and Cooperatives Minister Steven Sim, who is Bukit Mertajam member of parliament, Penang Chief Minister Chow Kon Yeow and Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad. BERNAMA PIC

Drugs are rigorously tested and do not compromise patient care, says Dzulkefly

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THE government has saved more than RM900 million over the past two years by prioritising the use of generic medicines across public and private healthcare, Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad said.

He said the “generic-first” policy ensured that whenever a cheaper generic medicine was available, it would become the preferred option for prescription.

“The policy delivers substantial fiscal savings without compromising patient safety or treatment outcome.

“Generic medicines approved for use in Malaysia have undergone rigorous testing, including bioequivalence studies.

“Generic medicines are clinically equivalent to original drugs. Cost savings do not come at the expense of quality or patient safety,” he said after the opening of the new Seberang Jaya Hospital building here yesterday.

The policy aligns with Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim’s push for value-for-money spending in high-cost sectors such as healthcare.

The policy is also an attempt to shift the prescribing behaviour of clinicians and build public confidence in generic drugs.

Dzulkefly called on medical professionals, including specialists and general practitioners, to embrace the approach, describing it as a necessary change in the system.

He said the Health Ministry would continue to collaborate with the Public Works Depart-

ment to monitor the progress of hospital projects nationwide, noting that some projects, including the Putrajaya and Papar Hospitals, had been delayed for over a decade.

Anwar opened the hospital building, with Dzulkefly and Penang Chief Minister Chow Kon Yeow in attendance.

Earlier in his speech, the prime minister described the event as a sentimental moment, recalling his involvement in the hospital’s development more than three decades ago.

He noted that the hospital began operating under a cluster concept in the 1990s, and at that time, he personally invited his longtime friend, Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, to open the facility.

“Although it is called a new block, in reality, it is an additional hospital facility at Seberang Jaya.

“After 30 years, I return to officiate it, and it is truly an emotional moment,” he said.

'NOT SUSTAINABLE'

PM CALLS FOR CAMPAIGN TO CUT SUGAR

Diabetes, obesity are major public health challenges, says Anwar

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PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim has called for a sustained nationwide campaign to reduce sugar consumption amid rising diabetes and obesity rates.

He said Malaysia had among the highest sugar consumption levels in Asia, making diabetes

and obesity major public health challenges.

He said some people were free of disease, but "looked for diseases" through poor eating and lifestyle habits.

"This is bad," he said at the launch of Seberang Jaya Hospital's new building yesterday.

Present were Penang Chief Minister Chow Kon Yeow and Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad.



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim (centre) posing for a picture with Seberang Jaya Hospital staff in Penang yesterday. With him are Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad and Deputy Health Minister Datuk Hanifah Hajar Taib. BERNAMA PIC

"We spend tens of billions on healthcare, yet people continue to consume excessive sugar. This is not sustainable," Anwar said, adding that prevention must begin in hospitals and government institutions.

He told the Health Ministry to ensure all beverages and food served in hospitals had minimal sugar, with clear educational posters displayed to raise public awareness.

"All hospitals and clinics must show clearly that excessive sugar is prohibited.

"Hospital meals, refreshments

and government functions must be controlled. If we don't start with ourselves, any campaign will fail."

Anwar said efforts to reduce sugar consumption must be consistent, cautioning against complacency over blood sugar levels.

"People say 6.8 is still okay, not yet seven. But if you reduce it to six, then five, that is when the body becomes healthy again," he said, adding that excessive sugar intake and overeating were preventable contributors to diabetes and obesity.

He said government depart-

ments, including those under the Prime Minister's Department, had been instructed to limit sugary food and drinks at official events.

He called on all ministries, hospitals and the armed forces to adopt similar measures.

"We can still have traditional food, but reduce the sugar."

He said the campaign must be part of a broader shift towards preventive healthcare, alongside physical activity and healthier eating habits.

"This is about wellness and it must involve the whole society."

Worker safety bolsters the economy, says Dzulkefly

By ARFA YUNUS
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PUTRAJAYA: Investing in occupational safety and health is a strategic investment critical for sustaining the nation's robust economic growth, said Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad.

The Health Minister said that such investment would help strengthen innovation and resilience among the workforce, ensuring they remain the "engines of a robust economy".

"When we invest in safety, we are not incurring a cost.

"We are indeed securing a strategic asset that drives innovation and resilience," he said at the Malaysian Industrial Safety & Health Association (Misha) Awards Ceremony on Friday night.

Besides being a legal, environmental, social and governance (ESG) duty, protecting workers was also a moral imperative, he stressed.

"In today's global landscape, our commitment to ESG principles is non-negotiable.

"Protecting our workers is a direct reflection of our integrity and our responsibility towards



"Protecting our workers is a direct reflection of our integrity and our responsibility towards sustainable development."

Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad

sustainable development," Dzulkefly added.

He said that occupational safety and health (OSH) should no longer be viewed as a peripheral issue but as one central to the nation's well-being and productivity.

"For every worker who leaves home, we must remember that each and every one deserves to return home safely and be protected from diseases, including those acquired in the workplace," he said.

He added that OSH goes beyond construction site accidents to

include long-term health issues such as respiratory illnesses, chemical exposure, and psychosocial hazards.

"A safe workplace translates into better productivity and competitiveness," he said.

Dzulkefly also highlighted the strategic collaboration between the Health Ministry and Misha in advancing Malaysia's lung health initiatives.

"Workplace exposures and environmental pollution are critical risk factors for lung diseases.

"Therefore, safeguarding our environment is not just an ecolog-



All smiles: Ng received the Misha Anugerah Pena Emas. — ARFA YUNUS/The Star

ical duty but a public health imperative," he said.

He took the opportunity to congratulate Misha for elevating the awards to the Asean level this year, with participation from Singapore, Brunei, Thailand, Cambodia, Myanmar, India, the Philippines and Indonesia, saying the platform fosters regional cooperation through the sharing of best practices.

Dzulkefly said the award ceremony was not merely about celebrating trophies or accolades but a testament to the collective commitment of the government,

industry players, and professional bodies to advancing a sustainable OSH culture.

"To the award recipients, your achievements epitomise trust, responsibility and leadership.

"Let us build a future of work that is safer, healthier and more productive, for the well-being of all workers and for a resilient Malaysia," he added.

Among the award recipients was Star Media Group Chief Content Officer Datin Paduka Esther Ng, who received the Misha Anugerah Pena Emas 2025 in recognition of her impactful reporting on occupational safety and health through the group's media platforms.

Other recipients include media practitioners from Astro Awani, Suria FM, Media Prima, New Straits Times, Bernama Radio, Radio Televisyen Malaysia's Radio Programme Division and TV AlHijrah.

The award, presented by Alliance for a Safe Community chairman Tan Sri Lee Lam Thye and former Occupational Safety and Health Department director-general Omar Mat Piah, recognises impactful journalism on workplace safety and health.

Ubat generik bantu turunkan kos perubatan

Berjaya jimat lebih RM900 juta dalam tempoh dua tahun pelaksanaannya

Oleh SYAJARATULHUDA MOHD ROSLI

SEBERANG JAYA - Penggunaan ubat generik adalah langkah strategik kerajaan untuk menurunkan kos perubatan tanpa mengurangkan kualiti rawatan khususnya bagi golongan berpendapatan rendah.

Menteri Kesihatan, Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad berkata, dasar itu telah berjaya menjimatkan lebih RM900 juta dalam tempoh dua tahun menerusi pelaksanaan Dasar Ubat Generik di sektor awam dan swasta sekali gus memastikan rakyat mendapat akses kepada ubat berkualiti pada harga berpatutan.

"Bukan kerana ia murah, ia tidak selamat atau tidak berkesan. Ubat generik setara dengan ubat asal dan ubat inovatif apabila dipreskripsikan oleh pakar dan klinician.

"Rakyat perlu faham bahawa ini bukan soal kos sahaja tetapi soal keberkesanan dan keselamatan rawatan," katanya selepas menghadiri Majlis Perasmian Bangunan Baharu Hospital Seberang Jaya yang disempurnakan Perdana Menteri, Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim di sini pada Sabtu.

Dr Dzulkefly menambah, komuniti klinikal termasuk pakar dan pengamal perubatan disarankan mengutamakan preskripsi ubat generik.

"Ubat generik juga telah melalui kajian ketat termasuk Kajian Bioekuivalens bagi



Dr Dzulkefly dan Anwar bergambar bersama petugas Hospital Seberang Jaya pada Sabtu.

membuktikan persamaan dengan ubat asal dari segi keselamatan dan keberkesanan.

"Dalam dua tahun lepas, kita telah melaksanakan *generic first policy* di mana ubat generik dijadikan pilihan utama apabila terdapat alternatif.

"Ini bukan sahaja langkah penjimatan malah memastikan akses rawatan yang lebih luas untuk rakyat," jelasnya.

Dalam pada itu, mengulas mengenai isu kelewatan projek Kementerian Kesihatan (KKM), beliau berkata, kementerianya sentiasa bekerjasama dengan Jabatan Kerja Raya (JKR) untuk memantau pelaksanaan projek terutamanya projek yang dikenal pasti bermasalah atau projek sakit.

"Kementerian akan mengadakan mesyuarat Jawatankuasa Pembangunan setiap

dua hingga tiga bulan bagi meneliti status semua projek termasuk tahap kemajuan, masalah dihadapi serta membuat laporan kepada Kabinet.

"Kita bekerjasama dengan JKR, sama ada di peringkat pusat atau negeri kerana JKR adalah pelaksana manakala KKM adalah klien yang memberikan syor dan pertimbangan," katanya.

Beliau turut berkata, terdapat beberapa projek hospital yang mengalami kelewatan serius termasuk Hospital Putrajaya serta di Sabah dan Sarawak seperti Hospital Papar yang masing-masing mengambil masa lebih 10 tahun untuk disiapkan.

"Tempoh 10 tahun, lima tahun, tidak boleh kita toleransi. Penantian terlalu lama adalah satu penyiksaan kepada rakyat," ujarinya.

'Henti semua amalan kartel tindas rakyat'

PM mahu usaha banteras, hapus ketirisan dilaksanakan menyeluruh

Oleh Siti Aminah Mohd Yusof
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Butterworth: Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim mahu semua amalan kartel yang menekan rakyat menerusi kenaikan harga dalam pelbagai sektor, termasuk pertahanan, kesihatan dan pembinaan, dihentikan.

Perdana Menteri berkata, kewujudan kartel bukan sahaja membebankan rakyat, tetapi juga menyebabkan pembaziran peruntukan kerajaan selain menjejaskan usaha menambah baik perkhidmatan awam dan kemudahan asas kepada rakyat.

"Jangan bergantung pada kartel yang menekan rakyat melalui kenaikan harga melampau dalam pelbagai sektor ter-

masuk pertahanan, kesihatan dan pembinaan," katanya ketika berucap pada majlis pelancaran blok baharu Hospital Seberang Jaya di Perai, semalam.

Anwar berkata penguasaan kartel dalam sistem perolehan serta pasaran tertentu mengakibatkan peningkatan harga yang tidak munasabah, sekali gus menyukarkan kerajaan menyalurkan dana tambahan untuk projek pembangunan seperti pembinaan hospital, klinik dan kemudahan rakyat di kawasan lain.

Perdana Menteri berkata, beliau turut memberikan penekanan khusus terhadap sektor pertahanan negara yang memerlukan pengurusan perolehan berintegriti serta bebas daripada pengaruh kartel.

Anwar berkata usaha membantas kartel serta menghapuskan ketirisan perlu dilaksanakan secara menyeluruh merentasi semua kementerian dan jabatan supaya penjimatan yang dicapai dapat dipulangkan semula kepada rakyat dalam bentuk kemudahan, bantuan serta peningkatan kesejahteraan.

Sementara itu, berucap pada



Anwar melawat pesakit selepas menyempurnakan majlis pelancaran blok baharu Hospital Seberang Jaya di Perai, semalam. (Foto BERNAMA)

Karnival Kebudayaan MADANI dan Kenduri Rakyat Pulau Pinang 2026 di Pejabat Pendidikan Daerah Seberang Perai Tengah, Permatang Pasir, Anwar berkata prestasi ringgit di kedudukan terbaik di Asia pada ketika ini mencerminkan keberkesanan dasar tatakelola kerajaan, kestabilan politik serta keyakinan pelabur terhadap hala tuju ekonomi negara.

Perkukuh nilai ringgit

Beliau yang juga Menteri Kewangan berkata, pengukuhan nilai mata wang negara turut didorong usaha berterusan kerajaan memastikan keamanan melalui peranan serta kerja keras tentera, polis selain ketegasan kerajaan dalam membantas rasuah dan pecah amanah.

"Di rantau kita, Malaysia jika dilihat dari segi ekonomi, ringgit kita prestasi terbaik di Asia. Bukan terbaik dibanding di ne-

gara jiran, tetapi di seluruh Asia ringgit kita terbaik.

"Kita kena kerja kuat, jaga negara, mula dengan tatakelola yang baik. Jangan bagi ada duit lebih, 'sapu' masuk dalam poket. Ada duit lebih, ambil komisen. Ada duit lebih, percayakan anak beranak," katanya.

Kelmarin, ringgit dilaporkan melepasi paras psikologi penting 4.00 berbanding dolar AS apabila mencecah paras tertinggi dalam tempoh lebih tujuh tahun pada 3.9992 sekali gus menandakan paras paling kukuh mata wang Malaysia dalam tempoh lebih tujuh tahun.

Beliau menegaskan tindakan penguatkuasaan diambil tanpa mengira status individu, termasuk golongan berpengaruh dan kaya dilakukan demi memelihara amanah rakyat dan memulihkan keyakinan terhadap institusi negara.

Menurutnya, dalam perole-

han pertahanan, kerajaan berpegang kepada prinsip memilih aset yang benar-benar diperlukan negara tanpa campur tangan ejen atau unsur komisen.

"Sebab itu saya tak mahu apa-apa tindakan yang baru-baru ini itu seolah-olah itu memberi gambaran semua angkatan tentera (tetapi) kita perlu tegas.

"Nak beli senjata, jangan pakai komisen. Nak beli senjata, jangan ikut ejen. Mesti pilih apa yang negara ini perlu dan bawa manfaat kepada negara ini, itu kita lakukan," katanya.

Perdana Menteri berkata, dalam soal kebajikan rakyat, kerajaan telah meningkatkan peruntukan bantuan, termasuk Sumbangan Tunai Rahmah (STR) dan Sumbangan Asas Rahmah (SARA) dengan jumlah keseluruhan RM15 bilion, selain kenaikan gaji penjawat awam membabitkan RM18 bilion tahun ini.

Kerajaan jimat lebih RM900j laksana Dasar Ubat Generik

Inisiatif pastikan rakyat terima ubat berkualiti pada harga berpatutan

Butterworth: Kerajaan berjaya menjimatkan lebih RM900 juta dalam tempoh dua tahun lalu menerusi pelaksanaan Dasar Ubat Generik dalam sektor kesihatan.

Menteri Kesihatan, Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad, berkata dasar itu menggalakkan penggunaan ubat generik dalam sektor kesihatan awam dan swasta bagi memastikan akses rakyat kepada ubat-ubatan berkualiti pada har-

ga yang berpatutan, tanpa menjejaskan aspek keselamatan dan keberkesanan.

"Perdana Menteri (Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim) sering menekankan soal penjimatan dan beliau sudah menyebut mengenai perkara ini sejak saya kembali (memegang jawatan) pada penggal kedua ini dan ia sudah pun diambil tindakan.

"Dalam dua tahun yang lalu, kita membuat apa yang dikatakan sebagai *generic first policy*, bila ada (ubat) generik, kita akan meletakkan itu sebagai pilihan utama," katanya selepas menghadiri Majlis Perasmian Bangunan Baharu Hospital Seberang Jaya (HSJ), di sini semalam.

Majlis perasmian berkenaan disempurnakan Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

Yang turut hadir Ketua Menteri, Chow Kon Yeow dan Menteri

Pembangunan Usahawan dan Koperasi, Steven Sim.

Selaras pelaksanaan dasar itu, Dr Dzulkefly berkata, komuniti klinikal termasuk pakar dan pengamal perubatan turut disarankan untuk mengutamakan preskripsi ubat generik.

Beliau menjelaskan ubat generik sudah melalui pelbagai kajian ketat, termasuk Kajian Bioekuivalen (Bioequivalence Studies) bagi membuktikan persamaannya dengan ubat asal dari segi keberkesanan dan keselamatan.

Sehubungan itu, Dr Dzulkefly menggesa rakyat supaya tidak ragu-gugai penggunaan ubat generik kerana ia setara dengan ubat asal atau ubat inovatif.

"Bukan kerana ia (ubat generik) murah, ia tidak selamat atau tidak berkesan. Itu satu anjakan mental ataupun paradigma yang perlu rakyat faham. Ia tidak me-

ngurangkan hal selamat ataupun hal keberkesanan bila pakar dan pegawai klinikal preskripsi ubat generik," katanya.

KKM, JKR pantau projek

Mengulas mengenai isu kelewatan projek Kementerian Kesihatan (KKM), beliau berkata, Kementerian sentiasa bekerjasama dengan Jabatan Kerja Raya (JKR) dalam memantau pelaksanaan projek, khususnya yang dikenal pasti sebagai projek sakit.

Beliau sendiri turut memperkerusi mesyuarat Jawatankuasa Pembangunan setiap dua hingga tiga bulan bagi meneliti status semua projek, termasuk tahap kemajuan dan permasalahan yang dihadapi serta membuat pelaporan kepada Kabinet.

"Jadi memang kita tahu dan kita bekerjasama dengan JKR sama ada pada peringkat pusat

ataupun negeri, JKR adalah pelaksana, kita klien, kita memang menumpukan untuk tindakan (percepat projek) tetapi akhirnya Kementerian (Kerja Raya) atau JKR yang akan membuat keputusan dan sebagai klien, kita memberikan syor dan pertimbangan untuk mereka buat keputusan," katanya.

Dr Dzulkefly berkata, terdapat beberapa projek hospital yang mengalami kelewatan serius, termasuk di Sabah dan Sarawak dengan memberi contoh Hospital Putrajaya dan Hospital Papar yang masing-masing mengambil masa melebihi 10 tahun untuk disiapkan.

Beliau menegaskan kontraktor perlu menunaikan tanggungjawab menyiapkan projek mengikut tempoh ditetapkan kerana kelewatan yang terlalu lama tidak boleh diterima. BERNAMA

Ubat generik: Kerajaan jimat RM900j

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Majlis perasmian itu disempurnakan Perdana Menteri Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim dan turut dihadiri Ketua Menteri Chow Kon Yeow dan Menteri Pembangunan Usahawan dan Koperasi Steven Sim.

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Bangunan baharu Hospital Seberang Jaya tampung 316 katil baharu

Butterworth: Pembinaan bangunan baharu Hospital Seberang Jaya (HSJ) setinggi sembilan tingkat bernilai RM371 juta membuktikan komitmen Kerajaan MADANI dalam usaha memperkukuh sistem penjagaan kesihatan awam negara, khususnya bagi penduduk Seberang Perai dan Pulau Pinang amnya.

Menteri Kesihatan Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad berkata HSJ dikategorikan sebagai Hospital Jenis 2, iaitu Hospital Pakar Major berfungsi sebagai Hospital Utama bagi Hospital Kluster Seberang Perai, yang merangkumi Hospital Bukit Mertajam (HBM), Hospital Kepala Batas (HKB) dan Hospital Sungai Bakap

(HSB), selain menjadi pusat rujukan utama bagi perkhidmatan kesihatan di Seberang Perai Utara, Seberang Perai Tengah dan Seberang Perai Selatan.

Beliau berkata pembinaan bangunan baharu berkenaan mula beroperasi pada 5 Mei tahun lepas, dilengkapi dengan fasiliti moden merangkumi pe-

nambahan 316 katil baharu menjadikan keseluruhan 729 katil, enam dewan bedah tambahan, tujuh katil Unit Rawatan Rapi (ICU), serta 16 katil Cardiac Rehabilitation Ward, khusus bagi Perkhidmatan Kardiologi Kanak-Kanak.

"Bangunan baharu ini bukan sahaja menambah ruang rawatan, malah tu-

rut menyokong aliran perkhidmatan pesakit yang lebih terancang dan efisien, di samping menyediakan persekitaran kerja yang lebih selamat, selesa dan kondusif kepada warga hospital, selaras dengan usaha berterusan dalam meningkatkan kualiti penyampaian perkhidmatan kesihatan kepada rakyat.

"Melalui penaiktarafan ini, penduduk Seberang Perai tidak perlu lagi mengharungi kesesakan di jambatan untuk ke Hospital Pulau Pinang (HPP) semata-mata bagi mendapatkan rawatan pakar. Fasiliti ini membawa perkhidmatan kepakaran lebih dekat kepada rakyat, merealisasikan prinsip *closer-to-home*," katanya.

Mind the youth mental health gap

Experts: Cultural stigma and parental pride remain biggest hurdles

By OON JUN-YANG
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PETALING JAYA: Cultural stigma and social expectations continue to deter young people from seeking mental health support, with experts citing awareness and persistent misconceptions as key barriers.

Malaysian Mental Health Association president Datuk Dr Andrew Mohanraj said the willingness to seek mental health support is often constrained by local cultural norms.

"In our society, mental health issues are frequently associated with weakness, or even attributed to supernatural causes under certain cultural or religious beliefs.

"This discourages open acknowledgement of problems and professional help-seeking," he said when contacted recently.

Dr Andrew added that improving mental health literacy

requires active involvement from institutions and associations to reduce stigma and expand awareness.

"Collaborative efforts by mental health non-governmental organisations and schools, such as workshops framed around child development and academic success, can go a long way in educating parents on how to identify mental health issues in their children," he said.

Findings from the National Health and Morbidity Survey 2019 showed that one in eight adolescents aged 10 to 19, and one in 20 children aged five to nine, are estimated to have a mental disorder, yet many have not sought treatment.

Psychologist Dr Anasuya Jegathevi Jegathesan said awareness of the seriousness of mental health issues is often clouded by parental attitudes.

"Many parents blame the child

for having a psychological issue, and that is the first hurdle we need to address," she said.

She added that misconceptions held by parents often affect their willingness to seek therapy for their children.

"Parents sometimes believe their child is simply 'crazy', when in reality the child lacks coping strategies to manage the disorder. When a child is diagnosed with autism, some parents blame the child or assume it is something that was somehow 'contracted'."

Anasuya also said negative past experiences with counselling discourage some parents from pursuing professional help.

"There are cases where individuals claim to be therapists despite not having completed a Master's degree and end up giving incorrect advice. Such incompetence can erode parents' trust in the effectiveness of therapy," she said.

She added that seeking external

help can also be emotionally difficult for parents.

"It can hurt their pride as parents to accept that there is something they cannot help their own child with," she said.

Meanwhile, child and adolescent psychiatrist Dr Wong Yim Chan said education is key to challenging misconceptions surrounding mental disorders.

"It is crucial for parents to understand that when a child has a disorder, their brain functions differently. This calls for different parenting approaches," he said.

Dr Wong added that more local resources are needed to guide families in managing mental health issues.

"In Malaysia, locally relevant online resources can be limited, but families can still rely on credible international platforms such as the National Health Service or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention," he said.



Mental health a shared responsibility – Mayor

By **Sandra Jaboh**
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KUCHING: Mental health continues to receive insufficient attention despite its growing impact on individuals, families and communities.

In this respect, it should not be seen as solely a medical issue.

“It is a family issue, a community issue, and a shared responsibility. We want everyone to work together towards our vision of a caring, inclusive, and healthy city, where the well-being of our people is always a priority,” said Kuching South Mayor Dato Wee Hong Seng at the ‘Prosper 2.0 Community Mental Health Seminar Series 2026’ here on

Saturday.

The programme was organised by the Mental Health Association (MHA) Sarawak.

Speaking in his capacity as an advisor to MHA Sarawak over the past 37 years, Wee stressed that mental health should not be feared or stigmatised.

“No one can avoid sickness and no one wants to be a mental health patient.

“Pressures from work, family responsibilities and daily life often contribute to emotional and psychological strain,” he said.

The mayor also highlighted the challenges faced by the ‘sandwich generation’ – those bearing multiple responsibilities between caring for ageing

parents and supporting their own children.

“After completing their studies, young adults are expected to enter the workforce, as parents may no longer provide financial support.

“Cultural factors may also shape family arrangements.

“As they marry, responsibilities continue to grow, including owning a home, raising children, and supporting education,” he added.

In this regard, Wee said the government was addressing these pressures through initiatives such as child-friendly and age-friendly cities, medical benefits, as well as other support systems.

Sharing his personal

experience, he encouraged individuals to develop positive coping strategies, including maintaining strong beliefs, exercising regularly, cultivating hobbies, and nurturing healthy habits.

“As a mayor, I also have to care for my family, the community, and many responsibilities.

“I have grown through these challenges,” he said.

He also emphasised the importance of communication within families, particularly between spouses.

“Sit down and share with your partner. When you feel sad, talk to friends or loved ones to release your frustration,” he said.