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## Budget 2024: Health Ministry gets biggest increase in allocation with RM41.2bil

KUALA LUMPUR: The Health Ministry is one of the ministries receiving the biggest increase in allocation in Budget 2024, with RM41.2 billion for next year, says Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

The Prime Minister said, when tabling the Budget themed "Reformasi Ekonomi, Memperkasa Rakyat (Economic Reform: Empowering the People)" in the Dewan Rakyat on Friday (Oct 13), said of the total, RM5.5bil will be used to procure medicine supplies, consumables, reagents, and vaccines.

Several new development projects will begin next year, including the Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia (USIM) Teaching Hospital Complex Phase 1 in Kota Tinggi and preliminary work for the construction of Sultanah Aminah Hospital 2, Johor Baru in Johor.

"The additional pathology block at Raja Perempuan Zainab II Hospital in Kelantan and the additional

emergency and trauma unit building at Sultan Abdul Azizi Hospital, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Serdang in Selangor (will also be built) in addition to five new health clinics, including in Rantau (Negri Sembilan), Kuala Tahan in Jerantut (Pahang), Kuala Jengal in Dungun (Terengganu) and Pulau Mantanani in Kota Belud (Sabah),” he said.

This is the second budget to be tabled by the unity government led by Anwar, who is also the Finance Minister.

Meanwhile, as a commitment of the unity government to upgrading dilapidated clinics, a total of RM300mil is allocated for 400 clinics that still have wooden structures and outdated wiring, he said.

The Prime Minister also announced that RM766mil is allocated for the procurement of medicines in Health Ministry hospitals, the replacement of beyond economic repair (BER) equipment and to meet the needs of various new service areas.

Anwar said the government also allocates RM150mil for the maintenance of the information technology system, as only 3% of health clinics in the country are equipped with digital health records, adding that digital records are essential for quick access to patient data.

He said in order to ensure that people stay healthy, the health sector should shift from treating the sick to intensifying disease prevention activities and enhancing the National Health Agenda.

As part of the efforts to curb health risks, the government will impose an excise duty on chewing tobacco products at the rate of 5% plus RM27 per kilogramme, similar to the excise duty on snuff (a type of smokeless tobacco), he said.

"The current excise duty on sugary drinks has been increased from 40 sen per litre to 50 sen per litre. The revenue from this tax will be used to treat diabetes and support dialysis centres," he said.

The Prime Minister said the Madani Medical Scheme has also been extended to the entire country with an allocation of RM100mil benefitting 700,000 people.

RM50mil will also be allocated to reimburse the cost of medical devices such as stents for the heart, he said. -  
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