

Cut check-up fees Fomema urged

By MARIAM THANY

FEES for mandatory medical check-ups of foreign workers should be lower than the charges imposed by Fomema.

This is the stand of the Malaysian Employers Federation in response to the proposal to review the medical fees paid to Fomema.

Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Chua Soi Lek said yesterday that the fees can be reduced to a more reasonable level and the Cabinet had agreed to discuss the matter.

However, Dr Chua refused to comment on the amount that can be reduced.

MEF executive director Samsuddin Bardan said that the move would ease the financial burden of employers.

"Now the medical fee is RM185 for a male worker and RM195 for a female worker and from the in-

formation we obtained, charges for the mandatory check-up by local clinics are between RM60 and RM70 per head, so it is much cheaper than the amount charged by Fomema.

"Why should the employers pay medical fees to Fomema when their charges are almost triple compared to the basic charges," said Samsuddin, adding that Fomema is only acting as a middleman and record keeper.

Now, the doctors have to update Fomema on the health of the workers and Fomema then passes the information to the Health Ministry for further action.

"Why do we need a middleman when the two parties could work together?" asked Samsuddin, adding that foreign workers need to undergo three check-ups in the first year of their arrival.

The first test is carried out in their country of origin two weeks



SAMSUDDIN: Fomema should hand over the task to the Health Ministry

before departure, while the first mandatory test is done a month after arrival in the country and

the second test at the end of year.

Samsuddin added that Fome should learn to trust the medical practitioners in the workers' country of origin.

"Employers have to spend hundreds of ringgit to ensure the health of their workers when the matter could be settled during first check-up.

"The results of the tests should not differ much from the first test.

"Subsequently, the country to spend millions to send workers back to their country.

"We should be worried about the illegal immigrants more because they do not undergo any medical check-up and they might be carrying infectious diseases such as HIV, syphilis, Hepatitis and C, and tuberculosis which could spread to Malaysians," he said.