

'Diabetes prevention neutralised'

Dr Wee: Govt's 'add and subtract' measures having adverse effects

THE "add and subtract" measures on the sugar industry seem to have neutralised the government's efforts at diabetes prevention, says Datuk Seri Dr Wee Ka Siong (*pic*).

The Ayer Hitam MP said while the government had imposed a sugar tax to discourage consumption, subsidies were still being extended to major sugar producers such as MSM Malaysia Holdings Bhd and Central Sugars Refinery Sdn Bhd (CSR).

"It seems that when you add and subtract, the impact becomes neutral. What is the ministry's red



line or guiding principle, given that the cost of treatment is so high and could be disastrous for the country," he asked Health Minister Datuk Seri Dzulkefly Ahmad at the Dewan Rakyat.

Dr Wee also raised concerns about the shortage of haemodialysis centres, pointing out that while contributors to the Social Security Organisation (Perkeso) could access treatment, many others without coverage were left uncertain about available assistance.

"For those who do not contrib-

ute, can the ministry inform MPs what kind of help is available? Do they need to prepare facilities before they can receive support, or are there other forms of aid they can apply for?" said Dr Wee, who is also MCA president.

Dzulkefly was earlier answering an original question from Datuk Abdul Khalib Abdullah (PN-Rompin), regarding the latest statistics on non-communicable diseases among rural residents and the ministry's proactive measures to curb rising dialysis treatment costs by adding satellite dialysis centres in small districts.

In his reply, Dzulkefly stressed

the importance of health literacy and early detection, particularly in rural areas where undiagnosed diabetes and hypertension remain widespread.

"Every undiagnosed case is a walking time bomb. We have seen patients with very high blood pressure and glucose readings who are still walking around, but they are at risk of stroke, heart disease and premature death," he said yesterday.

On fiscal policy, Dzulkefly said the Cabinet worked collectively to balance taxation and subsidies, including measures to incentivise or discourage sugar consumption.

"We constantly remind each other in Cabinet on how best to use taxation, whether to incentivise or de-incentivise, especially in the case of sugar," he said.

Dzulkefly also announced that the government would launch the National Action Plan for Healthy Kidney 2026-2030, with support from more than 120 NGOs, including the National Kidney Foundation, to expand access and awareness about kidney health.

"NGOs are helping us greatly in reducing the burden, and this new plan will strengthen our collective effort," he added.