

Broader coverage a welcome relief

Folks hope for more welfare protection for the elderly in the future

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PETALING JAYA: Malaysia's move to expand health tax relief next year to include coverage such as vaccination for parents and medical treatment for grandparents is a step towards protecting people's welfare especially the elderly, say health and tax professionals.

This was indicated during the rollout of Budget 2025, where it was stated that the purchase of self-care health monitoring gadgets such as glucose meter (glucometer), oximeter, blood pressure (BP) monitors and thermometers will be included in the individual's tax relief.

"The initiative to offer adult vaccines is most welcome," said Malaysian Pharmacists Society president Prof Amrahi Buang.

He said under the current National Immunisation Programme, coverage was limited to children and teenagers.

"The programme should also



provide coverage for the influenza vaccine as a preventive measure for the public.

"This is in line with efforts to manage the ageing population in 2030," he said when contacted yesterday.

As for the medical devices, he said pulse oximeters, BP monitors and thermometers were basic self-care monitoring tools under the initiative.

"If the tax relief can cover the (purchase for) grandparents, it is most welcome," he said, adding that these measures were among the steps taken by the government to "give back to the people".

The Budget 2025 announce-

ment on Oct 18 showed the Health Ministry receiving an allocation of RM45.3bil for improvement of healthcare facilities. This is among the highest apportionments compared to other ministries.

Among others, the individual tax relief for medical expenses will be up to RM10,000, encompassing payments made by taxpayers under medical and health insurance or takaful products with co-payment features.

Individual income tax relief of up to RM1,000 for expenses on sports equipment and activities for self, spouse and child, is to be expanded to parents.

Full medical check-up expenses for parents are also included, limited to RM1,000, to be expanded to include vaccination.

Medical treatment, special needs and parental care expenses are to be expanded to grandparents, which includes medical treatment at clinics and hospitals, treatment and homecare nursing, daycare centres, and residential

care centres; dental treatment not including cosmetic dental treatment; and full medical check-up and vaccination limited to RM1,000.

Associated Chinese Chambers of Commerce and Industry Malaysia treasurer-general Datuk Koong Lin Loong said since 1967, no tax reliefs had been included to protect the welfare of grandparents.

"This is a good move by the government to highlight the importance of elderly care and show the seriousness of the Madani government in enhancing preventive healthcare for all ages," he said.

He said such measures listed under Budget 2025 showed that the nation was moving towards having a more caring society.

"That is why, besides taking care of our spouses, or children, we also need to care for our parents and not forget our grandparents too," he added.

Koong also said there was further tax deduction on childcare

allowance paid by employers to employees, to be expanded to include elderly care (parents or grandparents).

Dr Veerinderjeet Singh, a senior advisor on tax policy at KPMG Malaysia PLT, said it was good to expand the coverage of income tax relief to include grandparents although the amount remained the same.

"Allowing grandparents to be covered is just widening the scope of coverage, which some may be able to use and claim relief," he said.

Malaysia Association of Tax Accountants vice-president Dr Mohd Fairuz A. Razak said the expansion of medical tax relief of up to RM10,000 was good, but it should be increased further in the future.

"In terms of the quantum, it is the same as 2024. This is good but maybe it can be fine-tuned.

"Of course, we understand that it cannot be increased but the coverage has been expanded," he said.