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Telemedicine-Ambulance

AMBULANCE WITH TELEMEDICINE FACILITY BY YEAR END

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 11 (Bernama) -- High-powered ambulances, to be put into service at the Kuala Lumpur Hospital (HKL) next month will be fully equipped by the end of the year with "telemedicine" equipment to facilitate treatment of patients by paramedics while on their way to the hospital.

Head of HKL Emergency Cases Department Dr Abu Hassan Ashari said the ambulances would be fully equipped in time for the Commonwealth Games and would be on par with that in developed countries.

He said the internal appearance of the ambulance would be akin to that in hospital wards and the medical officers attending the patient could receive live instructions from doctors waiting at the hospital via a communication system.

"We need to provide the best method of treatment with the advent of the Commonwealth Games or at least be on par with countries like Australia or Canada and to prove that we are equally capable," he said.

Dr Abu Hassan is also the Commonwealth Games' Public and Emergency Services director.

Abu Hassan said the idea of treatment by way of telecommunication was mooted by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad during his campaign to promote the Multimedia Supercorridor (MSC) concept for Malaysia.

He said many medical centres would be equipped with the equipment and interlinked with each other as well as with ambulances via the audio visual communication.

The communication between doctors and ambulance on call was vital towards treating patients while enroute to the hospital.

"It is also important for doctors to decide quickly on whether the patient needs to be transported by helicopter or just requires treatment at the nearest medical centre." he said.

The new fleet of ambulances, he said, would outperform their predecessors in terms of mobility, size, communication abilities and technological sophistication in various aspects.

Abu Hassan said the ambulances would have three main designs - Grade A or Advance Life Support Ambulances, Grade B or Basic Life Support Ambulances and Four-wheel Drives.

The Grade A ambulance would incorporate a taller roof and wider body as well as numerous beacons fitted to alert motorists of its presence.

"It will also be equipped with easy-to-reach medical apparatus for the attending paramedic inside who need not have to move from his seat," he said.

The Grade B ambulance however would be smaller in size but with emergency equipment far advanced than the current ones, he said.

Abu Hassan said a fully equipped Grade A Ambulance was estimated to cost about RM150,000 while a Grade B version would cost about RM100,000. Both vehicles would be of the Super Convoy Wheel Base Toyota make.

He said 20 Grade A, 20 Grade B and maybe one or two 4WD ambulances would be put into service with the approach of the Commonwealth Games.

According to him, about 40 of the new ambulances would become operational only within the Klang Valley but the service would be extended throughout the country after the Games.

The 4WDs, he said would be used in areas with difficult terrain and those impassable to conventionally built ambulances.

He also said the current fleet of some 200 ambulances operating in the

country would continue to be used. -- BERNAMA  
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