

30 JUL 1997

HOSPITAL PANTAI AIMS TO SET UP EIGHT DIAGNOSTIC CENTRES BY YEAR END

KUALA LUMPUR, July 30 (Bernama) -- Hospital Pantai Bhd plans to set up eight diagnostic centres in Peninsular Malaysia by the end of the year as part of its telemedicine network and overcoming manpower shortage.

The company plans to have five small diagnostic centres costing at least RM1.5 million each and another three big centres costing at least RM5.5 million each, said its executive chairman and chief executive officer, Mokhzani Mahathir.

Details such as the sites will be finalised by the end of August, and Hospital Pantai is also reviewing plans to expand to Sabah and Sarawak, he told reporters after the company's annual general meeting here today.

The company also plans to invest about RM10 million for the hub of Hospital Pantai's telemedicine network at a site next to its present hospital in Bangsar, Kuala Lumpur, he said.

The telemedicine areas to be undertaken are oncology, pathology, radiology and cardiology, he said.

He added that the health ministry is currently working on the laws and specifications for telemedicine.

Mokhzani said other players in the healthcare industry were also expected to be involved in the various levels of telemedicine.

He said the new facility which would incorporate the latest technology, has 350 beds, and will complement the existing hospital which might be redeveloped after the completion of the new facility.

The construction cost of the new site is about RM85 million, he said, adding that layout plan would be submitted to the company by its US consultant in the middle of this month, and the provider of the technology for the telemedicine would sign an agreement by the end of August.

He said apart from the diagnostic centres, Hospital Pantai was also building two hospitals, in Selangor and Johor each, and upgrading its existing facilities in terms of physical appearance and equipment to attract more doctors and compete with other players.

He said the hospital in Johor would be on a six ha site and that details are expected to be finalised by the end of August.

The development would be funded by the sale of Hospital Pantai stake in Singapore-based healthcare provider, Parkway Holdings Limited, which generated a gross cash of RM686 million.

He said the sale of the stake in Parkway was to reverse the trend of going regional and instead to establish a strong local base first. --

BERNAMA

MSL FR