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Telemedicine

TELEMEDICINE TO HAVE FOUR BROAD APPLICATIONS

KUALA LUMPUR, July 20 (Bernama) -- Four broad areas of medical health care will be incorporated under Telemedicine, one of the flagship applications of the Multimedia Super Corridor, Director General of Health Tan Sri Dr Abu Bakar Suleiman said today.

They are Lifetime Health Plan; Teleconsultation; Continuing Medical Education; and Mass-Customised/Personalised Health Information and Education.

Speaking to reporters after opening a Telemedicine Seminar organised by the Malaysian Medical Association at Kuala Lumpur Hospital here, he said the applications are targeted to keep the people in the wellness paradigm.

Dr Abu Bakar said the Concept Request for Proposals (CRFP) for Telemedicine is expected to be launched by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad on Saturday along with the CRFP for Electronic Government, Smart Schools and Smart Card.

He said the Telemedicine Task Force comprising 16 world class web-shaper companies and ministry officials completed the Telemedicine Blueprint, Telemedicine Standards and CRFP last month.

Dr Abu Bakar said under the Lifetime Health Plan, multimedia solutions would be provided for practitioners to tailor and personalise health plans to the specific needs of individuals, not only when they are ill but even when they are still in the state of wellness.

He said to facilitate lifetime care of an individual, his or her health data both in the state of wellness and illness would be systematically captured and made available to practitioners through the national telemedicine network, ensuring patient-focused and continuous care.

Dr Abu Bakar said the Teleconsultation system provides health care consultation services from a distance with the aid of appropriate multimedia information technology solutions.

He said this application is essentially an interactive discussion which involves medical specialists from the tertiary hospital providing remote consultation, whereby the provision of specialist service in terms of diagnosis, treatment and care management to remote areas to enhance the quality of care is its main objective.

"Teleconsultation is broader than consultation through video conferencing as it incorporates digitisation and transmission of patients' relevant medical records, including text, diagnostic images and medical charts between the referring and consulting practitioners," he added.

Dr Abu Bakar said that under Continuing Medical Education, essentially aimed at building human resources, telemedicine infrastructure will be put in place to enhance and complement the present continuing medical education programme using multimedia technology.

He said this would provide the opportunity for long-life learning for medical practitioners and hence upgrade the quality of health care to world class standards beside reducing the feeling of professional isolation among practitioners serving in the remote areas.

Dr Abu Bakar said under Mass-Customised/Personalised Health Information and Education, the people would be informed of choices concerning their health and take greater responsibility for their own health.

"Interactive knowledge database will be created for people to access from their homes, public kiosks or work places," he added.

He said Malaysia's telemedicine vision is thus aligned with Malaysia's

health goals which are wellness focused and person centred and to produce informed individuals and promote self-help.

"This new shift in healthcare is to be achieved through the promotion of wellness throughout an individual's life with the support via network comprising on-line health promotion and health information management tools," he added. -- BERNAMA

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