

# Marina slams doctors who conduct 'secret' HIV tests

PENANG: Malaysian AIDS Council chairman Datin Paduka Marina Ma-hathir yesterday ticked off private hospital doctors who screened patients for HIV infection without their consent.

She said it was unethical for doctors to run HIV tests without their patients' knowledge.

"Many private hospitals also refer HIV-positive patients to public hospitals to avoid having to deal with the problem, thus putting the burden on government doctors," she said when giving a talk on *Hidden Practices of Stigmatisation, Isolation and Discrimination of PLWHAs in Malaysia* at Universiti Sains Malaysia in conjunction with World AIDS Day.

She said discrimination against people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHAs)

occurred because of lack of education on the disease and stigmatisation.

Such education must empower people to be able to protect themselves, she said, adding that campaigns that tried to instil fear in people to prevent infection had also disempowered them.

"Even the practice of universal precautions in hospitals is not well explained to personnel as a way of protecting themselves.

"They simply refuse to admit any HIV-positive patients and take this as a form of self-empowerment for their own protection," said Marina.

She also said it was difficult to get PLWHAs to take on the role of educators as most of them feared the reaction of society once their HIV status was known.