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Hope for the facially deformed

KUALA LUMPUR, Tues. - Better days lie ahead for the facially deformed with the signing of a memorandum of understanding to launch the Cranio Facial Telemedicine Project.

The parties to the MoU are the Pantai Medical Centre, the WorldCare Health Malaysia Sdn Bhd and the Institute of Cranio Facial Studies Inc. Australia.

WorldCare Health Malaysia will contribute its telemedicine technology, the Australian Craniofacial Unit its clinical and academic expertise and Pantai its existing plastic and reconstructive surgical unit.

Executive chairman of Hospital Pantai Berhad Mokhzani Mahathir in his speech said: "The Malaysia Cleft Clinic in Pantai will provide the preliminary patient assessment and patient work up and investigations by orthodontists, ENT and plastic surgeons.

"The results and reports will be transmitted through the WorldCare Health Telemedicine Centre for consideration by the multidisciplinary specialist team in the Australian Cranio facial Unit (ACFU)," he said.

Mokhzani's speech was read by Hospital Pantai Berhad's Group chief executive officer Dr Ridzwan Bakar.

He said there were also plans to set up a second cleft clinic in the east coast by the three parties who signed the MoU today.

One in every 600 live births resulted in cleft lip, palate and associated anomalies.

Also present at the ceremony was deputy health director-general Datuk Dr Megat Burhainudin, Australian High Commissioner to Malaysia Robert Cotton, managing director and chief executive officer of WorldCare Health (M) Sdn Bhd Rajiv Ramaprasad and head of the ACFU David J. David.

Dr Megat in his speech lauded the efforts of the private sector in putting together such a facility which would bring together much needed multidisciplinary expertise of human resources in this area.

He said one of the shortcomings in the public health sector was that there was a great need for human resource investment as there was high staff turnover.

"There are plans to develop such a unit in the public sector but we need to to work on getting the expertise and having them stay in the public sector."

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