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PANTAI

PANTAI EYEING TAKEOVER OF TWO MORE HOSPITALS

IPOH, June 21 (Bernama) -- Pantai Holdings Bhd, a company providing integrated healthcare services, is thinking of acquiring equity in two more private hospitals in the Klang Valley, group chief executive officer (hospitals), Datuk Dr Ridzwan Datuk Abu Bakar, said today.

The two are part of the seven "standalone hospitals" in the country which had made sale offers to the company following the recent economic downturn.

He, however, declined to name them since the matter is still under consideration.

He told reporters this after the official opening of a RM42 million Hospital Pantai Putri Ipoh, owned by one of its subsidiary companies, by Health Minister Datuk Chua Jui Meng. The company's executive chairman, Mokhzani Mahathir, was also present at the function.

Pantai Holdings now has six private hospitals including the newly-acquired Ayer Keroh Medical Centre, now known as Hospital Pantai Ayer Keroh, while the others were Pantai Medical Centre in Bangsar, Pantai Cheras Medical Centre Sdn Bhd, Pantai Klang Specialist Medical Centre, Pantai Mutiara in Pulau Pinang and Pantai Putri in Ipoh.

Dr Ridzwan said moves by certain private hospitals to offer their equity to the company showed that the health care service is expensive to run and the pinch was seriously felt with the current economic downturn.

On Hospital Pantai Putri, he said although the hospital began operations three years ago, the delay in its official opening was due to moves in rescheduling its shareholders' equity since some had opted out.

Currently the majority shareholder is Pantai Holding (54 percent), with the Perak state government's investment arm, Yayasan Perak, holding 16 percent. The rest is divided between individuals and some companies.

Dr Ridzwan said the hospital would introduce specialised treatment for neuro surgery and cardiac surgery at the hospital soon in meeting with the high increase in demand for such services in the state.

He said local surgeons had been identified to head the units as a result of the high motor accident rates following to the high volume of traffic due to Perak's position as the central region of the federal highway and North-South Expressway.

After the new units had been established, the hospital's facilities would be upgraded in the next six months, he said. -- BERNAMA.

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