

Marina: New impetus in fight against AIDS

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Council seeks ways to expand scope of services, programmes

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KUALA LUMPUR, Wed: The fight against the AIDS epidemic by the Malaysian AIDS Council (MAC) is getting a new impetus, thanks to the high level of awareness of HIV/AIDS among policy makers.

Council president Datin Paduka Marina Mahathir said today the MAC is always seeking ways to expand its scope of services to be meaningful and relevant to the cause of HIV/AIDS.

However, the council requires "funds and people" to carry out its projects and programmes, Marina told **The Sun** today, after receiving exclusive auction and raffle items for the Red Ribbon Gala to be held on Sept 30 (see **other story**).

"So much has been done, but still there is so much more to do, as AIDS is a multifaceted epidemic that needs varying action plans and programmes.

"While we have been lucky in our fund-raising

efforts in the past, we have been living off our savings," she said.

She said the need for the council to make its programmes sustainable is "urgent and pressing".

Apart from maintaining its programmes, the council also has to scale up its action plans to meet every new situation and need.

Asked about MAC's plans to provide residential hospices for AIDS sufferers, she said the council has been pursuing this issue for a long time.

She said there is a great need to "place" people with AIDS, especially terminal cases, at hospices but there has always been a problem finding a location.

"Due to the ignorance of the disease, society tends to protest the planned locations for such facilities, even when the plans are in the initial stages," she said.

However, she said, with the help of the Health Ministry the council has already found a place and the facility is expected to be fully operational by the beginning of next year