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New heart centres soon in Serdang, Kuantan

JOHOR BARU, Mon. - The Health Ministry will build another two heart centres as the number of heart patients throughout the country is growing at an alarming rate of 100,000 a year.

One will be set up in Serdang while the other will be in Kuantan to cater to the needs of the growing population in the east coast.

Minister Datuk Chua Jui Meng said the five heart centres in the country today were not sufficient to cope with the number of patients.

"Like the existing centres, the additional centres will benefit more people owing to the reasonable charges and high standard of service.

"I had a heart by-pass operation at the National Heart Institute several weeks ago and was satisfied with the service.

"Our medical services are as good as other countries in terms of professionalism, care and team spirit," he said in his speech at the Masai MCA 51st anniversary dinner here last night.

Chua said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and former Deputy Prime Minister Tun Ghafar Baba also had similar operations at the NHI.

He said this was testimony of the leaders' confidence in the surgical standard in the country.

"I could have had my operation overseas but I chose to have it in the country because as the Health Minister, it is my obligation to lead by example."

On cancer, Chua said the country had 30,000 cases reported annually, of which 70 per cent were in the advance stage.

He said the existing treatment centres in government hospitals were not enough to cope with the growing number of patients but plans were underway to set up more centres.

"For example, one specialist centre in Mount Austin here will be ready by 2002 to cater to patients in the southern region.

"This is the third paperless hospital after Hospital Selayang and Hospital Putra," he said, adding that the RM560 million centre would boast 21st century standards.

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