

27/11/2001

AIDS council to educate people of Johor despite disagreement

KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. - The Malaysian AIDS Council said today it would help educate the people of Johor about HIV/AIDS even if it did not agree with Johor's mandatory screening for the disease for Muslims intending to get married.

"We met with the State Religious Department last week and aired our concerns about the testing," council president Datin Paduka Marina Mahathir said.

"Unfortunately, nothing much came out of the meeting," she added.

On Nov 13, the Johor Government took a controversial step of launching its pre-marital HIV/AIDS screening for Muslims despite objections by certain quarters.

"What the council is in the process of doing is preparing cards with our toll-free number to be passed out to the people of Johor," she said, adding that they would have an alternative place to seek information on HIV/AIDS.

She said this at a Press briefing at the council's office today.

The State Government should find out why it had so many AIDS cases first before coercing the people to take the test, she added.

Marina also said it was not the general population that needed the mandatory testing, but a selected group of people susceptible to the disease, including homosexuals and drug users.

"Not everybody is facing the same risk. It's not feasible for everyone to take the same test."

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