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#### Plan for haemodialysis centres in all hospitals

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TELUK INTAN, Mon. - All government hospitals will have haemodialysis centres to treat more patients within five years, Health Minister Datuk Chua Jui Meng said today.

He said by the end of the year, 62 hospitals, including those in rural areas, would provide such facilities at nominal fees.

At present, there are 121 government hospitals.

Chua said it was the wish of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad that government hospitals provide treatment for the poor in the rural areas.

"This matter was discussed in a recent Cabinet meeting as patients now have to depend on their savings, friends and relatives to pay for their treatment," he said after visiting the Teluk Intan Hospital.

Chua said government hospitals charged kidney patients RM15 per session and it was free for the poor.

"Actually, it costs a patient about RM2,500 a month to seek treatment outside government hospitals. There are also centres managed by non-governmental organisations on a non-profit basis but the number of patients is on the rise."

Chua said although there were 14 hospitals in Perak, only four - Taiping, Ipoh, Teluk Intan and Slim River - provided haemodialysis facilities to patients.

"By year-end, two more centres will be operational in Seri Manjung and Grik hospitals in Perak," he said, adding that the facilities in Ipoh would be expanded.

Chua said his Ministry was also offering the Teluk Intan and Slim River hospitals as satellite centres for Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia medical students to undergo their clinical stints.

"Both hospitals have specialist facilities and equipment. The people in these areas will benefit when medical students do their training under the guidance of UKM medical specialists."

Chua said the Government also recruited specialists from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Myanmar to fill vacancies in major hospitals, apart from relying on fresh graduates from local universities.

Earlier speaking to the hospital staff, Chua said a RM10 million polyclinic, with outpatient and other support facilities, would be built adjacent to the Teluk Intan Hospital under the Eighth Malaysia Plan.

He said existing facilities at the hospital, such as the maternity unit, would also be upgraded.