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Chua-ICU

MORE ICU WARDS TO BE SET UP IN GOVT HOSPITALS

IPOH, Nov 1 (Bernama) -- The Health Ministry plans to set up more Intensive Care Unit (ICU) wards in government hospitals nationwide to meet the increasing demand for this facility.

Health Minister Datuk Chua Jui Meng said the shortage of ICU wards in government hospitals had been raised by former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad and the ministry had embarked on a study on this.

He said the study, due for completion in 2005, was help to compile data on the requirements in ICU wards including the number of beds for patients.

"At present, ICU wards are only available at the major government hospitals. We will increase the number of ICUs in stages as the cost is high," he told reporters after opening the Hope Dialysis Centre here today.

Last Oct 17, Chua said a preliminary report on the ICU National Audit Report conducted between July 1 2002 and June 30 2003 showed that over 5,000 critical patients could not be admitted to ICU wards due to shortage of beds in 14 state hospitals.

"We are in the midst of constructing several new hospitals especially in the Klang Valley, which will be equipped with adequate ICU facilities," he said.

He said after the completion of the study, the ministry would ask financial assistance from the government to upgrade the ICU facilities in all the 14 state hospitals apart from setting up ICU wards in district hospitals.

On another development, Chua said the majority of the 71,000 people who have pledged to become organ donors were those from the younger age group.

"Not many (people) have volunteered to become organ donors. We want more to come forward. The number of kidney donors is also limited. Since the 1970s, only some 1,000 kidney transplants have been conducted," he said.

-- BERNAMA

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