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Cheaper drugs for HIV/AIDS patients

KUALA LUMPUR, Tues. - The cost of drug therapy to treat HIV/AIDS patients has been brought down to RM350 a month following the Government's efforts to make it affordable for HIV/AIDS patients, said Malaysian AIDS Council president Datuk Paduka Marina Mahathir.

"More HIV-infected sufferers can now go for treatment," she said after receiving two HIV viral load test machines from Roche Diagnostics (M) Sdn Bhd at the Malaysian AIDS Foundation in Sentul, today.

The cost for the three-in-one combination drug treatment for HIV patients a month used to be around RM1,200 but the Health Ministry amended the Patent Act to enable patented drugs to be imported from India, where it is cheaper.

The treatment, known as Highly Active Anti-retroviral Therapy (HAART), is a combination of three or four drugs used to bring the HIV virus below detectable levels, enhance the immune system, reduce transmission of the disease and help prevent HIV developing into AIDS.

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