

Big potential for clinical research

Industry has contributed RM1.16bil to national income so far, says PM

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KUALA LUMPUR: Sponsored clinical research has brought in over RM1.16bil in cumulative gross national income since 2012, says Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

The Prime Minister said that sponsored clinical research reached its peak last year, with a 24% increase in new sponsored studies compared to 2022.

"The establishment of Clinical Research Malaysia (CRM) to drive and catalyse this industry in Malaysia has proven to be a successful strategic initiative by the Health Ministry.

"What is truly astounding is the fact that CRM has been self-sufficient for the past six years and, while doing so, is significantly and positively impacting the country's clinical research landscape," Anwar said in his speech read out by Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad at the launch of CRM Trial

"The socio-economic value brought about by clinical research is impactful, with over 2,700 skilled jobs recorded in the clinical research field last year."

Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim

Connect 2024 at Connexion @ Nexus here yesterday.

Anwar, who is also Finance Minister, said the global clinical trial market was valued at over US\$80bil (RM379.3bil) in 2023, with a projected growth of 6.5% annually.

"Half of this is now very much focused within the Asia-Pacific region, especially in China, South Korea, Japan and Australia.

"Reflecting on this, I believe that the South-East Asian nations

are sleeping giants, because as a whole, it is one of the most diverse locations with a skilled workforce and supportive infrastructure," he added.

Anwar said the industry is also benefiting from the ripple effect of the industry's growth, with multinational pharmaceuticals and contract research organisations (CROs) marking their presence in the country, thus making it a regional hub.

He said multinational biophar-

maceutical companies such as AstraZeneca have expanded their clinical research team in Malaysia to support the growing needs of the organisation.

At the same time, he said Novo Nordisk Malaysia was recently elevated to Clinical Development Centre status, thereby making the centre a regional hub for clinical research operations in South-East Asia.

The Prime Minister said as the clinical research industry grows, supporting services such as CRO, laboratories, manufacturing plants, and logistic services will see expansion as well.

"This is where a more skilled workforce is created to support the industry's needs. We have already observed this at Parexel Malaysia, where its data management centre was set up to support the region.

"Additionally, the establishment of Hematogenix, a central oncology laboratory with Malaysia being one of only four global locations, has contributed

to the employment of scientists and bioinformaticians in the country.

"The socio-economic value brought about by clinical research is impactful, with over 2,700 skilled jobs recorded in the clinical research field last year," he added.

On a separate matter, Dzulkefly said his ministry will be issuing a statement on pharmaceutical giant AstraZeneca's Covid-19 vaccine soon, after he had earlier sought an explanation from the company in relation to the side effects of the vaccine as reported recently.

International media reported that AstraZeneca had admitted in a court document that its Covid-19 vaccine could cause rare side effects.

The firm is facing lawsuits over claims that the vaccine could cause death or serious injury, with a total of 51 cases filed in the UK High Court and claims reaching almost £100mil (RM592mil).