

Another suspected rabies case in Serian, says Dr Hilmi

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GEORGE TOWN, July 10 — Another patient is being treated in a Sarawak hospital for suspected infection of the rabies or mad dog disease virus.

Deputy Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Hilmi Yahaya said the ministry was still waiting for the patient's medical test results and if found positive for rabies, that patient would be the fourth person to have contracted rabies.

"I've been informed about this new suspected case from the same affected area and we are conducting tests and investigating whether the patient is actually infected with rabies or not.

"I cannot comment further on this.... we are giving appropriate treatment (to the patient)," he told reporters after the handing out of a contribution of RM100,000 from the UEM Edgenta Berhad zakat fund to Penang Hospital (HPP), here, today.

The contribution is for needy patients who require medical treatment including surgery at the hospital. Also present at the presentation were UEM Edgenta managing director and chief executive officer Azmir Merican and HPP director Datuk Dr Norsidah Ismail.

On the seven-year-old girl currently being treated at the intensive-care unit of the Sarawak General Hospital for rabies, Dr Hilmi said the child was still in critical condition.

Three children including two siblings, aged six and four, from the Serian district were confirmed to have contracted rabies after being bitten by a dog between less than an month and two months and then showing symptoms of the disease, while the other victim has not been confirmed to have been bitten by a dog or not.

On July 4, Monica Mazlan, 6, and her brother Jackson, 4, from Kampung Paon, Sungai Rimu, Serian, died after their parents allowed doctors to remove their life support system when the diagnosis confirmed they were brain dead.

On another note, Dr Hilmi hoped that more companies, especially government-linked companies, would contribute to the welfare fund of government hospitals nationwide to assist needy patients requiring treatment for chronic diseases or surgery.

"The government has indeed set up the welfare fund and each year, RM30 million to RM40 million is allocated for the fund but the amount is still insufficient to assist needy patients," he said.

Meanwhile, Azmir said besides HPP, UEM Edgenta had also contributed RM100,000 to Raja Permaisuri Bainun Hospital (HRPB) in Ipoh, Perak towards the fund.

"This is part of our corporate social responsibility and we plan to continue this effort at HPP, HRPB and other hospitals, as well as for local communities," he said. — Bernama

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