

# Pharmaceutical supply available for two to three months

By FAZLEENA AZIZ  
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**PETALING JAYA:** The current supply of pharmaceuticals remains stable, whereby, on average, companies hold approximately three months of active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs) and excipients and about two months of finished products.

The Malaysian Organisation of Pharmaceutical Industries (Mopi) said this provides a buffer that supports continued supply of locally-manufactured essential medicines in the near term.

"There are no significant supply disruptions or shortages reported. However, there are early signs of price increases of APIs and plastic packaging materials as well as diesel and logistics costs.

"There are also some challenges in logistics, particularly for exports to certain regions. At this stage, there are no specific medicines identified as being disproportionately affected," Mopi said.

However, since the local pharmaceutical manufacturing industry mostly relies on imported raw materials like APIs and excipients, any long-lasting problems in



**Stock take:** A pharmacist arranging medicines at a pharmacy in Petaling Jaya. — AZHAR MAHFOF/The Star

global supply chains could impact many different medicines instead of just a few specific ones, Mopi added.

In March, the Health Ministry stated the supply of medicines in the country is currently stable and under control, whereby the short-term impact from the conflict in the Middle East is minimal.

It added that the stock levels of medicines in the Health Ministry's

facilities are kept between one and three months based on consumption needs, supported by additional buffer stocks of up to two months at the concessionaire level for medicines supplied through logistics concessions.

Asked what kind of measures are needed to mitigate this, Mopi said the industry is in the midst of taking precautionary steps, including increasing inventory where

necessary and planning forward purchases of raw materials.

In addition, close coordination between industry and the Health Ministry will be important, including monitoring stock levels of essential medicines, ensuring flexibility in sourcing alternative raw materials where required and prioritising supply for the local market to ensure continuity of essential medicines.

Mopi is not a supplier to the Health Ministry, as it is a trade association that represents the local pharmaceutical manufacturing industry in Malaysia that works closely with the ministry.

Malaysian Association of Pharmaceutical Suppliers (MAPS) president Lim Teng Chyuan assured that supply remains diverse in terms of therapeutic category and sources, as members are mostly focused on generic sources which are wholly imported.

He said their 38 members collectively import from all five continents and 40 countries, for a total of 270 suppliers and around 2,000 products.

"India, South Korea, Thailand and Germany are the primary supplier nations we engage with. India accounts for 30% of our suppliers in terms of the number

of companies and an even larger proportion when considering the variety of products."

"Major concerns relate to cost escalations and the possibility of source countries limiting exports for the purpose of prioritising their own medicine security.

"So far, most of our members have experienced increases in freight costs and a small number have experienced increases in the cost of goods," he said in a video recording. >>

But Lim noted that pharmaceutical supplies are not merely limited to concerns over APIs, as many components are involved in the final product, including excipients and packaging.

He pointed out that hydrocarbons are also required for powering machines used in the manufacturing process and are used as materials in the production of APIs, including solvents.

Additionally, he said fuel is also required in the supply chain in powering transport, and if there's a shortage, the impact will be severe.

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## Freight cost hikes strain pharmaceutical supply chain

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"So far, the cost of freight has increased by around 20%, and in some cases, it has risen even higher, by 70% in cold chain transportation, according to feedback.

"Operation costs are also increasing. Most significantly, salespeople do not use Budi's quota for travelling on company business, and the cost of fuel for companies is escalating quickly.

"As for the drugs affected, the pharmacy services programme (PSP) is already working on getting a composite picture of the situation." >>

"Since the industry is represented by three associations, the central role of the PSP would be the most suitable point of coordination.

"The industry associations are supporting the data and information collection, which will prioritise national essential medicines and single-source products, according to the last consensus," he said.

Lim assured that where possible, companies will work towards ensuring sufficiency in a coordinated manner with feedback from PSP helping towards this goal.

Measures will include building inventory, proper and timely communication to prevent panic buying, and, if need be, product rationing, he said.

Lim expressed hopes that the government will offer some form of relief for suppliers, noting that measures such as inventory holding can place significant strain on cash flow.

# Govt to build medicine buffer stock

Move aims to secure medical supplies amid the global energy crisis



By RAHIMY RAHIM  
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**PETALING JAYA:** A national strategic buffer stock will be established to ensure a sufficient supply of medicines and medical devices amid the global energy crisis triggered by the conflict in the Middle East, said Akmal Nasrullah Mohd Nasir (*pic*).

The Economy Minister said the initiative was among the more robust measures for the medium and long term, in addition to transitioning from the use of raw resin materials to polymers for certain products.

"The global energy crisis affects not only oil and logistics but also

the supply of medicines and medical devices. Disruptions to the global supply chain can cause shortages of essential raw materials, such as active pharmaceutical ingredients, petroleum and ethylene oxide gas, thereby raising manufacturing and delivery costs," he said at the global energy crisis briefing broadcast live on television and social media.

Akmal Nasrullah said these were among matters discussed at the National Economic Action Council meeting yesterday.



The government, he said, has outlined several short-term measures to safeguard the country's supply of medicines and medical needs.

These include centralising the monitoring of medicine stocks to ensure better oversight, diversifying import sources to reduce reliance on any single supplier and activating emergency response plans to address potential disruptions swiftly.

Certain items will also be designated as controlled goods to help manage supply more effectively,

while a Special Access Pathway will be implemented to ensure continued access to critical and life-saving medicines.

In the medium to long term, the government is exploring more robust structural measures to bolster resilience, he said.

This involves the establishment of a national strategic buffer stock to enhance preparedness for future shocks, as well as the transition from resin-based materials to polymers for specific products, aiming to improve supply stability.

Efforts are also underway to develop a national medicine security policy through MyMedSecure, alongside initiatives to strengthen the local pharmaceutical and

medical device industry.

At the same time, the initiative is aimed at reducing dependence on imports and building greater self-sufficiency, he explained.

In an uncertain global environment, he said the government will continue to act in a structured and comprehensive manner to ensure the people are protected, the country's strategic supplies remain secure and Malaysia's economy remains resilient.

"Our focus is not merely to monitor the crisis. Our focus is to manage its impact, reduce its risks and ensure the people can navigate through this challenging period as best as possible," said the minister.

## MoH: No extension for pharmacists who reach maximum tenure

**PUTRAJAYA:** The Ministry of Health (MoH) has clarified that there will be no contract extensions for pharmacists whose services are reportedly ending, as they have reached the maximum contract tenure of five years.

The ministry said it has taken note of concerns raised in a media report titled '45 Contract Pharmacists in Limbo as Jobs

End Saturday' published on April 2.

In a statement, the MoH said the affected officers may reapply when permanent positions are opened at the end of 2027 under a new entry grade of UF10, previously known as UF43, in line with the implementation of the Public Service Remuneration System (SSPA) which came into effect on Dec 1, 2024.

"This strategic realignment is an important step to strengthen the national health human resource system to be more equitable, transparent and competitive in the long term," the statement read.

The ministry also explained that any offer of permanent appointment is conditional.

"Appointment and placement letters will only be issued once

candidates meet all stipulated criteria, including health clearance, Statutory Declaration, as well as confirmed vacancies," it said.

In addition, the MoH noted that there are also cases where the officers involved are reserve candidates who must wait their turn for appointment based on current vacancies. — Bernama

# National Heart Institute to open Sabah hospital at 10-acre Likas site

**KOTA KINABALU:** Sabah will soon have its own National Heart Institute (IJN) Hospital, which will be built on a 10-acre site in Likas.

This follows the signing of a memorandum of understanding (MoU) between Yayasan Sabah Group investment arm Innoprise Corporation Sdn Bhd (ICSB) and IJN at the Sabah International Convention Centre (SICC) here.

ICSB executive chairman Datuk Jasni Daya said with the establishment of a high-standard heart hospital here, patients will no longer need to rely entirely on facilities outside the state, thereby reducing travel costs and expediting access to specialist treatment.

"This initiative will also help support the existing healthcare system in Sabah, including services at the Sabah Heart Centre at Queen Elizabeth II Hospital, which currently has limited capacity compared to the actual needs of the people," he said.

According to him, the strategic collaboration will benefit Sabahans not only in terms of improved access to healthcare, but also in terms of economic development and job opportunities. IJN chairman Tan Sri Dr Noor



Hajiji (centre) witnesses the exchange of documents between Ghulam Haidar Khan (third left) and Dr Mohamed Ezani (second right).

Hisham Abdullah said heart disease remains the leading cause of death in Malaysia, and this trend highlights the growing need for a more responsive and integrated healthcare system.

Therefore, he said access to high-quality treatment must be expanded so it can be enjoyed more widely regardless of geographical location. Dr Noor Hisham said Sabah's IJN Hospital would also open up a new market in health tourism, offering world-class medical services at affordable prices.

Chief Minister Datuk Seri Hajiji Noor, who is also Yayasan

Sabah Board of Trustees chairman, witnessed the MoU signing on Monday.

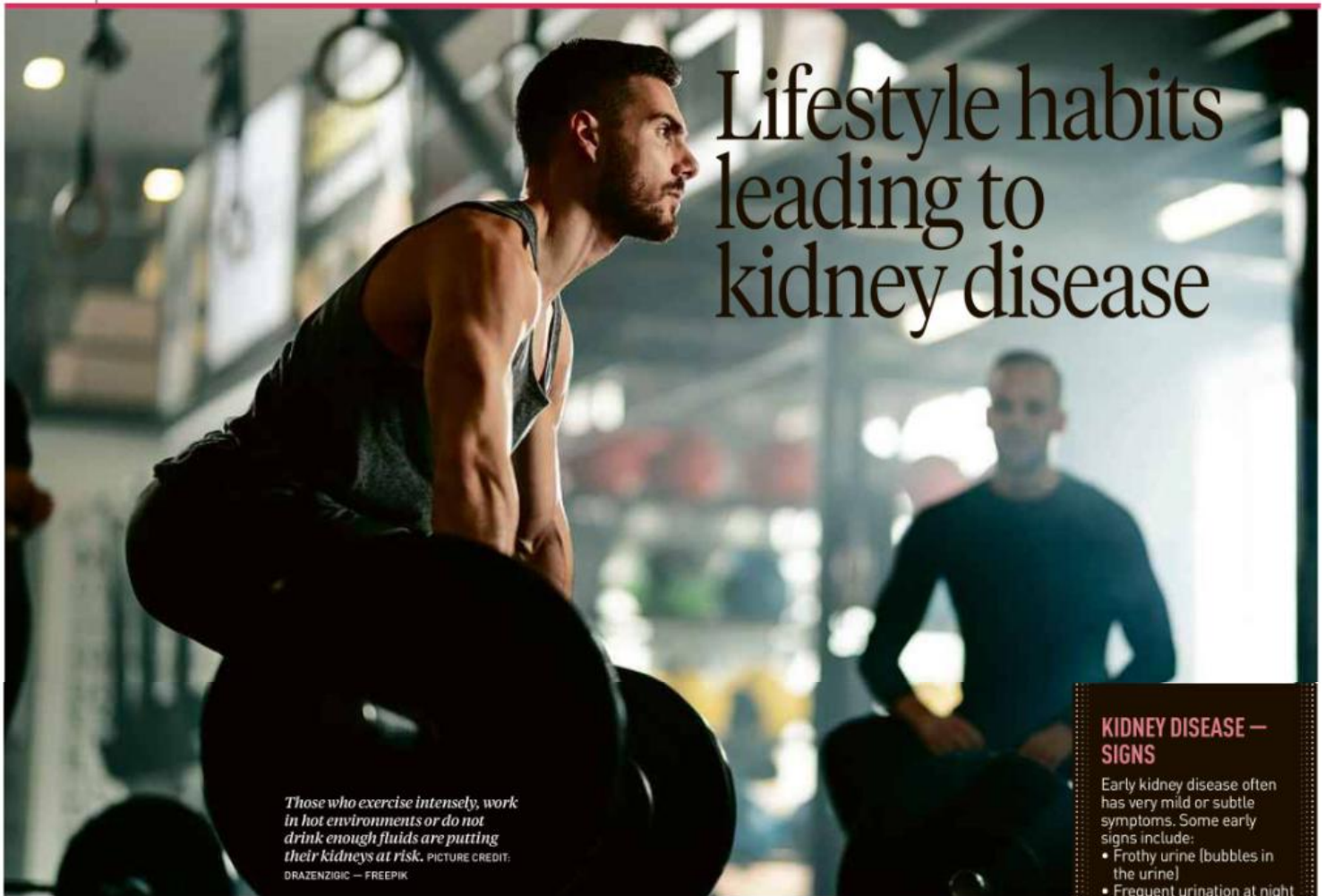
He said the setting up of the first heart hospital in Sabah is a manifestation of the government's commitment to provide the best healthcare for the people.

Signing on behalf of Yayasan Sabah Group were director Datuk Ghulam Haidar Khan Bahadar and ICSB executive chairman Datuk Jasni Daya, while IJN was represented by group chief executive officer Prof Datuk Seri Dr Mohamed Ezani Md Taib and clinical chief officer Datuk Dr Shaiful Azmi

Yahaya.

At the same event, the University College Sabah Foundation (UCSF) also inked an MoU with IJN University College, which is expected to open opportunities for the development of a skilled and professional workforce in the healthcare sector in future.

UCSF was represented by vice chancellor Datuk Dr Rafiq Idris and registrar Norashikin Ahmad, while IJN University College was represented by vice chancellor Prof Emerita Dr Durrishah and IJN deputy chief executive officer Datuk Akmal Arief Fauzi.



# Lifestyle habits leading to kidney disease

*Those who exercise intensely, work in hot environments or do not drink enough fluids are putting their kidneys at risk.* PICTURE CREDIT: DRAZENIGIC — FREEPIK

## KIDNEY DISEASE — SIGNS

Early kidney disease often has very mild or subtle symptoms. Some early signs include:

- Frothy urine (bubbles in the urine)
- Frequent urination at night (nocturia) or a noticeable increase or decrease in urine amount. Some people may also develop high blood pressure.

When kidney disease becomes more advanced, symptoms include:

- Fatigue
- Swelling of the legs
- Shortness of breath
- Loss of appetite
- Weight loss

**K**IDNEY disease is often linked to diabetes and ageing, but this doesn't mean young people are spared.

In fact, cases are increasingly being seen in younger adults without traditional risk factors like diabetes.

Pantai Hospital Ampang internal medicine specialist Dr Mah Doo Yee says this trend may be related to changes in modern lifestyle habits, including diet, supplement use and hydration patterns among younger Malaysians.

High protein diets, for example, are hugely popular among young adults, but unfortunately make the kidneys work harder because the kidneys are responsible for filtering waste products produced when protein is broken down, explains Dr Mah.

"Over time, this extra workload may place stress on the kidneys, especially if the diet is taken in very large amounts for a long period."

Excessive use of gym supplements may further increase this burden. Some supplements may contain substances such as stimulants like caffeine or creatine, which can con-

tribute to dehydration or place additional strain on the kidneys if used excessively.

Those who exercise intensely, work in hot environments or do not drink enough fluids are also putting their kidneys at risk, adds Dr Mah.

Frequent dehydration can reduce blood flow to the kidneys and cause kidney injury. In severe cases, it may lead to a condition called acute tubular necrosis (ATN), where the kidney's filtering cells are damaged due to lack of blood and oxygen.

### LIFESTYLE RISKS

In the name of well-being, many young adults also resort to herbal remedies, detox drinks or slimming products, some of which do not clearly state all their ingredients.

Dr Mah says some may contain diuretics, which are substances that increase urination. These are sometimes added to slimming products to promote rapid weight loss, but they can lead to dehydration, which may affect kidney function.

Certain herbal remedies also contain steroids that can reduce pain or inflammation and make people feel

temporarily better, but prolonged use can have harmful effects.

Detox drinks, which are also popular among young adults, need to be approached with caution.

Dr Mah says some detox drinks may contain laxatives which increase bowel movements and cause fluid loss. This may lead to dehydration or electrolyte imbalance, placing additional stress on the kidneys.

These products should be used cautiously, especially if the ingredients and safety aspects are not clearly known.

Metabolic disease is a major contributing factor to chronic kidney disease (CKD).

The Malaysian Dialysis and Transplant Registry 2023 shows that diabetes and hypertension are the main causes of kidney failure, accounting for 56 per cent and 30 per cent of cases, respectively.

These two conditions operate in the background to gradually damage the kidneys over years, without showing any apparent signs.

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*Diabetes and hypertension are the main causes of kidney failure.* PICTURE CREDIT: IJEAB — FREEPIK

# Wakaf al-Quran ke Hospital Mesra Ibadah

Sumbangan WUIF kukuh sokongan rohani pesakit

Oleh NORAFIZA JAAFAR

**MELAKA** - Yayasan Warisan Ummah Ikhlas (WUIF) menyalurkan sumbangan wakaf al-Quran bagi program Hospital Mesra Ibadah di tiga hospital di negeri ini.

Ketua Pegawai Eksekutif WUIF, Marhaini Yusoff berkata, kerjasama itu terjalin selepas Jabatan Kesihatan Negeri (JKN) Melaka menggalakkan kerjasama badan bukan kerajaan (NGO) dalam menjayakan inisiatif itu.

Beliau berharap kerjasama itu dapat menjadi model dalam usaha membumikan ayat-ayat al-Quran dalam persekitaran hospital.

"Kita bukan sekadar menyumbangkan al-Quran, tetapi mahu memperluaskan kolaborasi supaya ayat-ayat suci ini dapat membantu pesakit dari sudut sokongan spiritual.

"Hospital Mesra Ibadah ini sudah mempunyai asas seperti fiqh ibadah, namun kita melihat masih ada ruang untuk diperkaskan, khususnya dalam aspek sokongan rohani kepada pesakit dan petugas," katanya selepas Program Penyerahan al-Quran wakaf

di Wisma Persekutuan di sini pada Selasa.

Turut hadir, Timbalan Pengarah Kesihatan Negeri (Perubatan) JKN Melaka, Dr Azhar Mohd Sali dan Ketua Pegawai Content WUIF, Fazrul Ismail.

Marhaini berkata, pendekatan tersebut mampu mencetuskan inovasi baharu dalam meningkatkan kualiti perkhidmatan hospital, termasuk membantu petugas kesihatan berdepan tekanan emosi ketika bertugas.

Pada masa sama, beliau berharap kerjasama ini dapat dikembangkan dan menjadi contoh kepada negeri lain.

Sementara itu, Dr Azhar berkata, Hospital Mesra Ibadah merupakan usaha berterusan Kementerian Kesihatan (KKM) dalam memastikan pesakit beragama Islam melaksanakan ibadah dengan sempurna walaupun dalam keadaan sakit.

Menurutnya, konsep tersebut menekankan rawatan holistik yang mengintegrasikan aspek fizikal dan spiritual.

"Antara komponen utama termasuk bimbingan solat pesakit, pengurusan jenazah, khidmat nasihat agama serta penyediaan kemudahan ibadah.

"Kadangkala ketika sakit, pesakit terlepas pandang soal ibadah. Jadi program seperti ini membantu meningkatkan kesedaran dan



Dr Azhar dan Marhaini selepas sesi taklimat dan penyerahan al-Quran wakaf untuk tiga hospital di JKN Melaka pada Selasa.

Kadangkala ketika sakit, pesakit terlepas pandang soal ibadah. Jadi program seperti ini membantu meningkatkan kesedaran dan memudahkan mereka melaksanakannya."

- Dr Azhar

memudahkan mereka melaksanakannya," katanya.

Beliau berkata, kajian menunjukkan sokongan rohani mampu memberi ketenangan, mengurangkan tekanan serta mempercepatkan proses pemulihan pesakit.

Ujarnya, pelaksanaan Hospital Mesra Ibadah turut meningkatkan kualiti perkhidmatan berteraskan nilai Islam selain memastikan hak pesakit Muslim untuk beribadah tidak diabaikan serta memenuhi tuntutan syariah.

"Inisiatif ini juga mampu meningkatkan imej hospital sebagai institusi kesihatan yang mesra dan prihatin, sekali gus meningkatkan keyakinan masyarakat terhadap perkhidmatan yang disediakan," katanya.

Selain itu, katanya, ia turut menyokong dasar dan polisi KKM dalam penyediaan fasiliti, latihan kakitangan serta modul bimbingan rohani kepada pesakit.

Pada Selasa, pihak hospital menerima sumbangan wakaf daripada WUIF yang terdiri daripada naskhah al-Quran lengkap dengan panduan tajwid dan terjemahan untuk diagihkan ke wad, surau serta ruang menunggu waris.

Hospital Mesra Ibadah adalah di Hospital Melaka, Jasin dan Alor Gajah.

# Kerajaan wujud stok penimbun strategik sektor perubatan

## Langkah pastikan keterjaminan ubat dan peranti susulan konflik Asia Barat

**Kuala Lumpur:** Kerajaan akan mewujudkan stok penimbun strategik nasional bagi memastikan keterjaminan ubat dan peranti perubatan negara susulan Krisis Tenaga Global akibat konflik Asia Barat.

Menteri Ekonomi, Akmal Nasrullah Mohd Nasir, berkata ia adalah antara langkah mampan untuk jangka sederhana dan panjang, selain beralih daripada penggunaan bahan mentah resin kepada polimer bagi sesetengah produk.

Beliau berkata, langkah lain termasuk membangunkan dasar keterjaminan ubat negara melalui MyMedSecure serta memperkasa industri ubat dan peranti perubatan tempatan.

"Krisis Tenaga Global bukan hanya menjejaskan minyak dan logistik, tetapi juga bekalan ubat dan peranti perubatan.

"Gangguan rantaian bekalan global boleh menyebabkan kekurangan bahan mentah penting se-

perti API, petroleum dan gas etilena oksida, sekali gus menaikkan kos pengilangan dan penghantaran," katanya pada taklimat krisis tenaga global yang di- siarkan secara langsung di stesen televisyen tempatan, semalam.

### Laluan Akses Khas

Akmal Nasrullah berkata, kerajaan juga akan melaksanakan Laluan Akses Khas sebagai langkah jangka pendek untuk memastikan bekalan ubat-ubatan dan peranti perubatan kritikal di negara ini sentiasa terjamin.

Selain itu, katanya, kerajaan akan turut memantau stok ubat secara berpusat, mempelbagai- kan sumber import, mengaktif- kan pelan gerak balas kecemasan

serta menetapkan item tertentu sebagai item kawalan.

Beliau berkata, semua perkara berkenaan dibincangkan pada Mesyuarat Majlis Tindakan Ekonomi Negara (MTEN), semalam.

"Dalam keadaan dunia yang tidak menentu, kerajaan akan terus bertindak secara teratur dan menyeluruh untuk memastikan rakyat terus dilindungi, bekalan strategik negara terus terjamin dan ekonomi Malaysia berdaya tahan.

"Fokus kita ialah mengurus kesan, mengurangkan risiko dan memastikan rakyat dapat melalui tempoh mencabar ini sebaik mungkin," katanya.

BERNAMA

**Kerajaan turut pantau stok ubat secara berpusat, pelbagaikan sumber import, mengaktifkan pelan gerak balas kecemasan**

**Akmal Nasrullah Mohd Nasir,** Menteri Ekonomi



## JAKIM syor saringan psikospiritual tangani isu kesihatan mental

**Kuala Lumpur:** Peningkatan kes bunuh diri dan pembunuhan dalam kalangan ahli keluarga atau *familicide* menjadi isyarat penting perlunya pendekatan lebih menyeluruh dalam menangani tekanan mental, khususnya dalam kalangan umat Islam.

Ketua Pengarah Jabatan Kema-juan Islam Malaysia, Datuk Dr Sirajuddin Suhaimie, berkata pihaknya bercadang memperkenalkan saringan psikospiritual secara formal dengan kerjasama Kementerian Kesihatan (KKM).

Beliau berkata, pendekatan itu akan merangkumi penilaian klinikal dan aspek spiritual seperti kekuatan iman serta sokongan komuniti sebagai faktor pelindung.

"JAKIM sentiasa mengutamakan kerjasama dengan KKM bagi memperkukuh intervensi kesihatan mental, khususnya dalam kalangan umat Islam.

"Kami melihat potensi untuk memperkenalkan saringan psikospiritual secara formal yang menggabungkan penilaian klini-

kal dengan sokongan spiritual bagi memastikan intervensi lebih menyeluruh, selamat dan berkesan," katanya kepada BH.

Beliau berkata demikian ketika mengulas peningkatan kes tragis termasuk pembunuhan lima sekeluarga di Cherating, Pahang serta beberapa insiden *familicide* lain yang dilaporkan sebelum ini.

Katanya, gabungan kepakaran klinikal dan kekuatan spiritual mampu membantu individu menangani tekanan dengan lebih berkesan serta membina masyarakat yang lebih berdaya tahan.

Sirajuddin berkata, antara usaha yang dilaksanakan ialah pengenalan Manual Psikospiritual Islam sebagai pelengkap kepada rawatan profesional, merangkumi pendekatan tadabbur, terapi zikir dan pengurusan emosi berasaskan konsep sabar, tawakal

serta rahmah.

"Pendekatan psikospiritual Islam bukan menggantikan rawatan klinikal, sebaliknya melengkapkan intervensi sedia ada.

"Islam menuntut penjagaan nyawa dan kesejahteraan jiwa, justeru mendapatkan rawatan bukanlah tanda kelemahan iman," katanya.

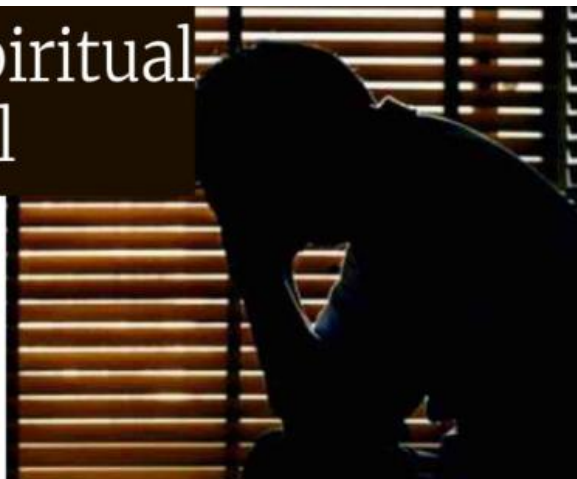
Selain itu, JAKIM turut memperhebat kempen kesedaran melalui khutbah, media dan platform digital bagi menghapuskan stigma terhadap rawatan kesihatan mental.

Sejak 2018, JAKIM juga menubuhkan Pusat Khidmat Keluarga, Sosial dan Komuniti (KSKCare-Centre) sebagai pusat sehati yang menyediakan perkhidmatan kaunseling, bimbingan keluargaan, rawatan Islam dan terapi secara percuma.

Beliau berkata, pusat itu kini



Sirajuddin Suhaimie



diperluas ke beberapa lokasi termasuk Masjid Tuanku Mizan Zainal Abidin di Putrajaya, selain cawangan di Selangor, Melaka, Terengganu dan Pulau Pinang.

"Sepanjang 2024, KSKCareCentre menerima 267 kes, meningkat kepada 507 kes tahun lalu, manakala bagi Januari hingga Februari tahun ini, 96 kes direkodkan.

Selain itu, Jabatan Agama Is-

lam Wilayah Persekutuan turut mewujudkan Pusat Khidmat Keluarga Sosial dan Komuniti (PKKSK) di UTC Pudu Central, Kuala Lumpur bagi menyediakan perkhidmatan di kawasan bandar.

Sirajuddin berkata, kewujudan pusat seperti ini menjadi tunjang kepada usaha memperluas perkhidmatan sokongan psikospiritual berteraskan syariah serta memastikan bantuan dapat diakses masyarakat dalam menangani konflik rumah tangga dan isu sosial.