

Kudat gets specialist clinic service – thanks to UMS

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KOTA KINABALU: Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) achieved a milestone in reducing the inequity between urban and rural areas in Sabah, as Hospital UMS recently opened specialist clinic services in UMS Rural Medical Education Centre (RMEC), Kudat.

According to Dean of the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences (FMHS), Prof Dr Saffree Jeffree, the faculty's specialist and trainee lecturers have been travelling 190km to Kudat in order to run various specialist clinics on average twice a month at UMS RMEC.

"The faculty has 127 specialists who cover the entire range of specialties, from Internal Medicine to ophthalmology to orthopaedics.

"We intend to leverage on our human assets to do what we do best, which is providing evidence-based specialist care services to the people who need it the most," he said.

Dr Saffree added that the specialist clinics services are crucial as Kudat is one of the districts furthest geographically from a tertiary hospital in Sabah, in which only Pitas Hospital is geographically further from a tertiary hospital with specialist services.

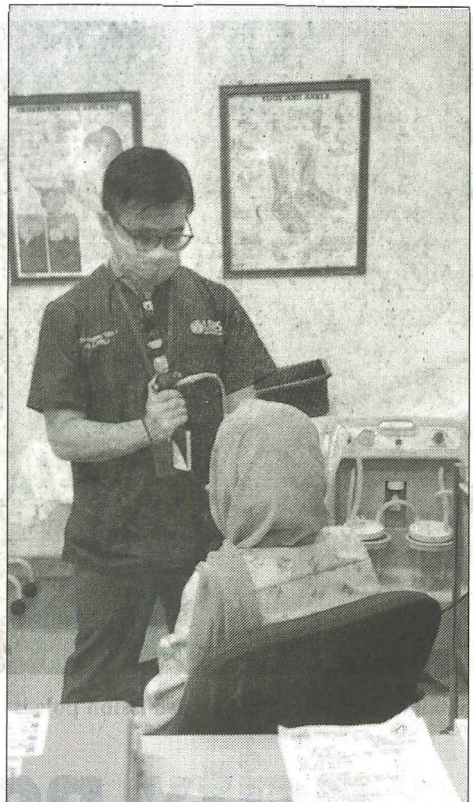
Meanwhile, the State Health Director, Datuk Dr Christina Rundi, expressed her enthusiasm for HUMS to provide a platform to enable high quality specialist services to be provided by the FMHS.

"I highly support all the FMHS UMS effort as this could reduce the treatment gap between urban and rural areas in Sabah," Dr Rundi said.

HUMS Director, Prof Dr Helen Benedict Lasimbang, also emphasised that in an age of post-Covid-19 physical distancing, it is imperative outpatient spaces are decongested to reduce pandemic spread.

"Moreover, as specialist services are spread between Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education services in Kudat, it will increase the quality of care available to patients, promote inter-agency and inter-ministry collaboration, and ultimately, heighten the level of care available to the populace of Kudat district," she said.

Dr Helen further explained that two specialties have already begun their serv-



Specialist services to be expanded gradually.

ices in RMEC Kudat, which included psychiatry (spearheaded by Dr Nicholas Pang and Dr Amiruddin Mohd Kassim), and Ear, Nose and Throat (spearheaded by Dr Eugene Wong).

"Future expansion plans include paediatrics, rehabilitation medicine, and the exciting addition of anaesthetic services to supplement the Ear Nose and Throat surgeon.

"The long-term plan is for FMHS specialists serving Hospital UMS to spread their wings both to RMEC Kudat in an outpatient setting and Hospital Kudat operating theatres, performing elective surgeries in collaboration with Hospital Kudat," Dr Helen said.

Specialist services will be expanded gradually to RMEC Kudat over the next year, provisionally on Fridays for now.

For more information, please contact RMEC Kudat at 088-612460 to find out latest specialist clinic times or to book an appointment.