

Universiti M'sia Sabah Hospital starts specialist clinic services in rural Kudat

The Star 20.8.2020

- Thursday, 20 Aug 2020

12:46 PM MYT

By **KRISTY INUS**

KOTA KINABALU: Kudat residents can now have access to specialist care services courtesy of Universiti Malaysia Sabah Hospital (HUMS) twice a month at the UMS Rural Medical Education Centre (RMEC).

The university's Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences dean Prof Dr Saffree Jeffree said they recently started the initiative to bridge urban and rural health services, where the faculty's specialists and trainee lecturers have been travelling back and forth to the rural district, which was about three hours drive from the state capital.

In a statement issued by UMS' strategic management and corporate communication centre, he said 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.

"The specialist clinic services are crucial as Kudat is one of the districts furthest geographically from a tertiary hospital in Sabah," he said in the statement.

In line with that, HUMS director Prof Dr Helen Benedict Lasimbang said it was imperative that outpatient spaces are decongested to reduce Covid-19 risk of spreading.

She said through this initiative, specialist services in Kudat are spread between the Health Ministry and Education Ministry services, which will increase the quality of care available to patients while promoting inter-agency and inter-ministry collaboration.

Dr Helen further explained that two specialties have already begun their services in RMEC Kudat, with its psychiatry spearheaded by Dr Nicholas

Pang and Dr Amiruddin Mohd Kassim; and Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT) spearheaded by Dr Eugene Wong.

"Future expansion plans include paediatrics, rehabilitation medicine and an addition of anaesthetic services to supplement the ENT surgeon.

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

Specialist services will be expanded gradually in RMEC Kudat over the next one year, which is currently on Fridays for now.

The public can contact RMEC Kudat at 088-612460 to find out the latest specialist clinic times or to book an appointment.