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Med and pharma production plants to be set up in Malaysia



By Pank Jit Sin

Five projects, with an estimated value of close to RM390 million, will be set up in Malaysia over the next few years.

The projects, announced by Health Minister Datuk S. Subramaniam recently, are expected to contribute RM445.2 million to the gross national income (GNI) and provide 1,599 jobs by 2020. The five companies involved are ABIO Orthopaedics Sdn Bhd, Karl Mueller Scientific Sdn Bhd, Kotra Pharma (M) Sdn Bhd, RB Life Sciences Sdn Bhd and Sima Medical Sdn Bhd.

The projects are part of the Healthcare National Key Economic Area and are attributed to the Economic Transformation Program. The companies are involved in diversified fields such as the manufacture of orthopedic devices, disposable surgical accessories, generic pharmaceuticals and other medical devices.

When asked about the impact the projects would have on local medical practice, Dr Sub-

ramaniam said the plants for medical devices would signal a transition from Malaysia's current situation as an importer to one that produces and exports medical devices and implants.

The culmination of increased generic pharmaceutical production for oncology and other drugs, together with medical devices and accessories, could bring down the cost of healthcare in the country in the long term, said Dr Subramaniam.

The ministry is placing strong emphasis on encouraging greater private sector participation in healthcare to further drive growth in the sector and to improve the people's access to quality healthcare.

"In our role as key enablers to the industry and supporting collaborative efforts between the public and private healthcare providers, it is mandatory that we set in place industry-friendly policies to sustain high growth momentum in coming years," he said. **PT**