

RM1Bil Boost For 10 New Healthcare NKEA Projects

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PUTRAJAYA: The Health Ministry has announced 10 new projects under the Healthcare NKEA (National Key Economic Area) with an investment of RM1bil to boost the manufacturing of respiratory products and pharmaceutical drugs along with the supply of renal solutions.

The projects are expected to generate 1,219 job opportunities and contribute RM673.9mil to the Gross National Income (GNI) by 2020, Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr S. Subramaniam said.

He said that the ministry had set up a new entry point project (EPP) cluster for renal products in line with its aim to position Malaysia as the regional supplier of products and services for renal solutions.

"The focus will be on the manufacturing of products used for renal replacement therapy such as dialysers, dialysate, filters and solution bags as well as innovative renal replacement therapy services.

"Beyond ensuring potential earnings from exports, this EPP will ensure that quality renal treatment products are accessible to all Malaysians," he told a press conference yesterday.

Dr Subramaniam named four project owners who had come forward with plans to enhance the manufacturing of respiratory products.

These included the setting up of three new manufacturing facilities and another to invest more in producing metered dose

inhalers from an existing facility in Malacca.

Three foreign companies will also collaborate with local companies under several projects, including a French multinational pharmaceutical company to produce certain patented drugs, a New Zealand company to produce drugs to treat rare diseases and a Saudi Arabian company to set up a vaccine formulations facility in Negri Sembilan.

Under the Renal Products EPP, another global supplier will manufacture haemodialysis and peritoneal dialysis fluids from Negri Sembilan.

A local company will offer a home treatment programme while another will invest in a manufacturing facility in Pahang to produce dialysis filters and dialysers.

"The 37 projects we have today under the Healthcare NKEA are expected to bring in a total GNI impact of RM6.43bil by 2020, creating 26,665 jobs and attracting investments of up to RM4.86bil," Dr Subramaniam said.

On the issue of Serdang Hospital, which has reported several incidents of ceiling cave-ins, the minister said he will wait for the report from the Public Works Department before deciding on the next course of action relating to the contractor responsible for the building project.

According to news reports, seven ceiling cave-ins have occurred at various sections of the eight-year-old hospital since 2011. Five people escaped injuries in the latest incident on Monday.