

Headline Hospital with heart: MAA's Cardiac Diagnostic & Treatment Centre offers services at affordable cost  
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KUALA LUMPUR: MAA Medicare Heart Charity Fund has officially opened its Cardiac Diagnostic and Treatment Centre at Jalan Sultan Azlan Shah here, chief executive officer of the MAA Medicare Charitable Foundation Datuk Aliyah Karen said during NSTP's visit to the facility today.

The centre is now ready to offer comprehensive cardiac and vascular diagnostic services to underprivileged heart disease patients at a highly-subsidised cost.

Since the establishment of Medicare as a Corporate Social Responsibility Project in

1995, the MAA has provided diabetes patients who cannot afford treatment at private centres with subsidised dialysis treatments as many as 13 times a month.

It presently treats 830 patients at 12 dialysis centres throughout the country.

Based on the project's success, the MAA Board decided to extend their services to help underprivileged Malaysians suffering from heart disease.

"We decided on helping heart patients because the number one killer in Malaysia is heart disease, and the cost is exorbitant if you require medical treatment. We did a feasibility study and discovered that waiting lists at government hospitals are too long, and most patients cannot afford private hospitals.

"So we set up the MAA Medicare Heart Charity fund and worked with the Ministry of Health to make the Cardiac Diagnostic and Treatment Centre a reality. We are very blessed that we have leading cardiologists with private hospitals like Gleneagles Kuala Lumpur, Prince Court Medical Centre and Pantai Hospital on a rotation basis," said Aliyah.

NSTP ran into one of the doctors – Gleneagles Kuala Lumpur consultant cardiologist Dr Dewi Ramasamy – who was on duty for the day, and who had earlier performed an angiogram on a patient who could no longer afford the cost of a second angiogram in private care, and had to go to a general hospital.

Elsewhere, NSTP came across Moorthy a/l Kanan, 63, a former sportsman and goalie for Perak in the 1970s, who was recovering from treatment. Although he was weak, he was able to give a thumbs' up when asked what he thought about the centre's services. Keeping him company was his wife and daughter, Gleneagles nurse Usha Moorthy.

"Last July, he went to the General Hospital for a follow-up stress test and they found an abnormality. He was then referred to the Serdang Hospital, where they made an appointment for him to have an echocardiogram on Dec 21.

"I was disappointed with the late appointment, because I want him to be attended to faster, because we did not know the extent of the blockage in his heart," said Usha.

Concern for her father's health prompted the Gleneagles nurse to seek the advice of Dr Dewi, who encouraged her to bring her father to the newly-opened MAA centre.

"(At the centre) they told us it was not necessary to do an echocardiogram, but instead to do an angiogram immediately.

"So, I am very pleased with the centre's services. It was quick, fast and the doctors are experienced. The rooms for patients to recover in are also very good," added Usha.