

NOW that I am retired, I can devote more time to community work.

I have been a Lions Club member for 15 years. I was secretary of JB Lions Renal Care Foundation before I was installed as chairman for the term 2012 to 2014.

Many of the patients who come for dialysis treatment at the two JB Lions-MAA-Medicare charity dialysis centres in Taman Baiduri and Taman Sri Tebrau, both in the city, belong to the low-income group.

I'm not saying that all of them are poor, but the majority are.

The patients tell me it's because they are poor that they eat whatever they can afford. It is very sad. But I hope that poor households will also make an effort to adopt a healthy diet, as staying healthy is, in a way, being wealthy.

We currently have about 120 patients undergoing dialysis treatment at both our centres. The patients are divided into three shifts. In spite of this, there is still a long waiting list,

so we may have to raise funds to open another dialysis centre.

Each patient requires dialysis treatment three times a week, and each session is four hours long. The subsidised rate is RM110 per treatment.

Some patients are so weak after the dialysis that they need treatments to restore their energy levels.

Lions Club tries to help as much as it can, such as by reducing the cost of the patients' treatment.

For example, all patients will receive two free treatments during the festive seasons each year.

Patients who are identified as poor may even be given one month of free treatment if we can find a sponsor for the patient.

We also have the Children's Education Aid Fund and the Excellence Education Fund to disburse aid to the children of patients at our centres.

We have bought a van to ferry patients from their homes to the dialysis centres and back. Some patients do not have transport while others



Nam Fun Lai



*The dialysis centres operate in three shifts to accommodate the **high number of patients.***

do not drive.

I cannot emphasize enough the need for a healthy diet, which I really hope poor families will make the effort to adopt.

I find that the patients we receive at our centres are getting increas-

ingly younger. It is not only the middle-aged and the elderly who are afflicted these days.

Kidney disease incurs costly treatments.

A healthy lifestyle is a must, to prevent this and many other dis-

eases, whether you are rich or poor.

■ **Nam Fun Lai, 62, is a retired businessman. He lives with his family in Taman Universiti, Johor Baru.**

Interview by Chuah Bee Kim