

Headline	HIV, AIDS cases on the rise in Sarawak		
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HIV, AIDS cases on the rise in Sarawak

PETRA JAYA: Sarawak has recorded an increase in the number of new HIV and AIDS cases over the past 12 years.

State Local Government Minister Datuk Dr Sim Kui Hian (BN-Batu Kawa) told the State Assembly that 210 new HIV cases and 104 AIDS cases were reported between 2004 and October this year.

During the same period, there were 46 HIV/AIDS-related deaths.

The rate of new HIV cases in the state had increased from 3.3 per 100,000 population in 2004 to 7.8 per 100,000 population this year.

“The majority of the HIV cases in Sarawak are transmitted through sexual contact with an infected person, mainly from heterosexual transmission. It contributed to more than half of the new HIV cases last year.

“What is more worrying is that HIV transmission due to homosexual sex is on the rise,” he said, adding that it contributed to almost half of the new cases (86 cases or 41 per cent) this year.

He said a multi-agency collaboration was needed to address the

problem as the magnitude of HIV/AIDS and other sexually-transmitted infections was a symptom of other underlying issues.

Kuching will be the first city in the state to embark on the “Project Getting to Zero HIV” programme, which will be a platform for the state government and non-governmental organisations to work together. Kuching will host the national-level “World AIDS Day 2016” on Dec 8.

Dr Sim also said the ministry was working closely with the state Resource Planning and Environment Ministry on new strategies to manage waste efficiently.

He said the state only recycled 7.1 per cent of the 700,000 tonnes of waste generated last year.

The state assembly was also told that the number of teenage pregnancies had dropped by about 50 per cent between January and October this year, compared with the same period three years ago.

There were 2,087 cases reported from January to October this year, compared with 4,078 cases during the same period in 2013.

State Welfare, Women and Community Wellbeing Minister Datuk Fatimah Abdullah said despite the drop, the One Stop Teenage Pregnancy Committee would continue to intensify its efforts to educate and raise awareness among students.

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