

Headline	Help not forthcoming AIDS council		
MediaTitle	Borneo Post (Kuching)		
Date	03 Dec 2011	Color	Full Color
Section	Home	Circulation	88,150
Page No	3	Readership	166,173
Language	English	ArticleSize	329 cm ²
Journalist	N/A	AdValue	RM 3,788
Frequency	Daily	PR Value	RM 11,365



Help not forthcoming – AIDS council

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KUCHING: The state has insufficient voluntary manpower to help sex workers and AIDS-risk individuals, said Malaysian AIDS Council (MAC) president Tan Sri Mohd Zaman Khan.

Speaking to reporters covering the Living Positively programme on Thursday, Zaman said although the number of those infected here was quite low, effort must be taken to curtail its spread.

As of October this year, 1,367 individuals were infected with AIDS in the state, mostly due to free sex.

“AIDS infection cases are mainly caused by sexual activities, and Limbang has recorded the highest number. We have called for a non-governmental organisation (NGO) to be formed in Limbang to help sex workers, but it was rejected because the number of voluntary manpower was too low to make it a success. In any case, we still hope that through the cooperation of NGOs, MAC, local authorities and the state government, the formation of a Limbang NGO could be implemented soon.”

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Environment’s permanent secretary Dr Penguang Manggil said the state government would help sex workers and AIDS-risk groups.

He added that the authority concerned would help identify NGOs that were able to make the programme a success.

A total of 91,362 HIV infections were recorded in Malaysia since 1986, and 12,943 have died of

AIDS as of 2010. Of that figure, 70 per cent contracted AIDS from drug abuse while the rest due to unhealthy sex practices and mother-to-child infection.

Themed Getting to Zero, the Living Positively programme, which was held in conjunction with World AIDS Day, aims to achieve three zeros in the HIV/AIDS pandemic: zero new infections, zero AIDS deaths, and zero discrimination.

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Tan Sri Mohd Zaman Khan, Malaysian AIDS Council (MAC) president



LIVING POSITIVELY: (From left) State police commissioner Datuk Mortadza Nazarene, Zaman and Dr Penguang speaking to reporters before the launch of the Living Positively programme on Thursday.