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MAC in talks with insurance companies

by FARAH ADILLA

THE Malaysian AIDS Council (MAC) is in talks with insurance companies to insure people infected by HIV/AIDS, which is already offered in the US and UK, as it is yet to be practised in Malaysia.

MAC president Tan Sri Mohd Zaman Khan said although HIV/AIDS patients were recently allowed to withdraw money from their Employees Provident Fund account to finance their medications, the cost of their monthly medications can be very expensive.

"We are fighting for it. We are talking with the insurance companies in Malaysia to allow HIV and AIDS patients to be insured," he told reporters during the Malaysian AIDS Foundation's Malaysian Business Consortium on HIV/AIDS Forum and Round Table Discussion in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

He said the council has been spending RM30 million annually for antiretroviral therapy tablet, a drug to suppress the HIV/AIDS virus.

He added that although there are initiatives by the government to educate people on HIV/AIDS, the most important issue other than medication is prevention.

"This is when education on HIV/AIDS came into the picture. We urged companies to organise sessions on the issue which MAC could conduct," he said.

He also said that since the first case was reported in 1986, the government has financed MAC almost 100% with grants, in its effort to prevent the dis-

ease from spreading.

Meanwhile, the one-day forum, a joint effort between the Malaysian AIDS Foundation and MAC, highlighted innovative prevention and education programmes run by businesses to address the HIV/AIDS issue.

In a statement, the organisation said that a total of 3,652 new cases of HIV infection were notified through the national surveillance system in 2010, bringing the cumulative caseload to 91,362.

"These figures clearly demonstrate the crucial need for new approaches to boost the efficiency of HIV/AIDS prevention and education programmes," it said.



(From left) Ministry of Health (MoH) senior principal assistant director (AIDS/STI) Dr Asiah Ayob, MoH deputy director of disease control (communicable disease) and head of AIDS/STI sector Dr Sha'ari Ngadiman, Business Coalition on AIDS Singapore executive director Susie Solomon, MAC president Mohd Zaman and Malaysian AIDS Foundation Trustee Ralph Dixon at the forum in Kuala Lumpur