

Headline	Aids patients aren't all bad, some dont deserve it Kenil		
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Aids patients aren't all bad, some don't deserve it: Kenil

BY HENRY SIYU

MUKAH: The community here has been urged to discard the negative perception that HIV carriers and Aids patients are 'bad people' and should be 'isolated'.

"When one contracts HIV, he or she tends to be 'marked as bad'. Worse still, the patient might be considered as deserving it.

"This kind of negative perception and treatment towards them (HIV patients) should be discarded at all cost," said Political Secretary to the Chief Minister, Haji Kenil Haji Jeraie.

"They contracted the disease because they were ignorant, like the wife who got it through her husband, or innocent, like the new born baby who got it from his or her parents.

"As such, we should not force a social stigma on them. On the other hand, these HIV patients badly need the support of their families and the society at large.

"I know some of us are worried about contracting the disease when mingling with HIV patients," Kenil said, adding that the HIV virus could not be transmitted through food, drinks, shaking hands, sharing of public facilities or even insect bites.

HIV/Aids are normally infected through sex or insertion of drugs into the body, he explained.

However, he expressed his concern on the increasing number of those infected with HIV in Sarawak.

"The number of HIV infected cases were: 2008 (137), 2009 (143), 2010 (141), 2011 (169) and from January to September this year 2012 (140). Something has to be done to tackle or reduce them," he said.

Kenil reiterated that in 2011, 128 of the cases were transmitted through heterosexual activities, followed by 23 cases of homosexual activities and 14 cases of drug insertion.

He disclosed these figures while officiating at the state-level World Aids Day 2012 held at the central parking bay of Mukah Old Town yesterday.

"A safe sex approach is just to have sex with your partner only (wife or husband). For those yet to marry, please distance yourself from sex activities, prostitutes, homosexuals and so forth.

"Some resort to condoms but it is not 100 per cent safe. For drug addicts, don't share the syringe/needle. It is also advisable to go for HIV scanning voluntarily at the clinic, especially for pregnant mothers," he explained.

Kenil expressed his gratitude to

the Health Department for selecting Mukah to host the state-level event.

"I would like to thank Mukah Division Health Officer Dr Osman for successfully organising this very event and and Igan Member of Parliament Datuk Haji Abdul Wahab for his contributions," he said.

Themed 'Zero new HIV Infections, Zero discrimination and Zero Aids related deaths', the event aimed at creating awareness within the community to reduce deaths caused by Aids, to receive treatment of antiretroviral for those qualified, to increase the standard of health among HIV positives, and to provide basic knowledge on how to take care of HIV patients.

The one-day event was made merrier with the rare appearances of national artistes headed by Sidi of Kumpulan Data. There were also lucky draws featuring two Samsung Galaxy Notebooks sponsored by the Igan MP.

Among those present at the event were Wahab, Dr Osman, Pemanca Haji Mohd Jali Kawi, senior officers from the Health Department, local heads of government departments and community leaders.

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KENIL (third right) aiming the blowpipe at the balloons on stage to officiate the event as Wahab (second right) and others look on.