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# More efforts needed to reduce HIV transmission

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**PEKAN:** While the Health Ministry's Harm Reduction programme is successfully reducing the transmission of HIV through drug use, transmission through sexual contact is still on the rise.

Deputy Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Hilmi Yahaya said the shift in HIV transmission from needles to sexual contact was a worrying trend.

"Right now, HIV cases through needles is decreasing but it is increasing through random sex without protection," said Dr Hilmi after launching the Harm Reduction Programme at the Peramu Jaya Health Clinic here.

He said the programme, which began in 2006, had already reduced the transmission of HIV among intravenous drug users from 74% in 2002 to 16% in 2015.

Pahang had recorded a 46% drop from 85% in 2006 to 39% last year.

Dr Hilmi said the ministry had cooperated with the Malaysian AIDS Council and other NGOs since 2015 to reach out to drug users and those with HIV/AIDS so they would seek treatment.

He said the success of the initial programme at the Kuala Sungai Baru Health Clinic in Malacca had seen it being expanded to 12 other health clinics nationwide.

"We need NGOs as outreach workers to be a bridge between drug users and the health clinics.

"They are able to approach HIV/AIDS cases and persuade them to come to the clinic," said Dr Hilmi.

He added that with the help of the council, the effectiveness and sustainability of the programme would increase.

Dr Hilmi added that NGOs could play a role to help realise the target of reducing new AIDS cases by 90% in 2030.



Dr Hilmi accompanied by Pahang Health Department director Dr Shaari Ngadiman (second from left) at the launch of the Harm Reduction Programme at Peramu Jaya Health Clinic in Pekan.