

# 250 new kidney dialysis patients yearly

**KUCHING:** The number of kidney dialysis patients in the state increases with an average of 250 new patients every year.

Meanwhile, patients in need of a transplant increase by four cases annually, said Welfare, Community Wellbeing, Women, Family and Childhood Development Minister Datuk Seri Fatimah Abdullah.

She said the average death rate of the dialysis patients was over 10 percent and that the treatment and transportation costs borne by the patients were burdening, especially for low-income groups.

"The patients have to undergo frequent treatment sessions which is three times a week for hemodialysis treatment while for Continuous Ambulatory Peritoneal Dialysis (CAPD), it is 24 hours a day and seven days a week.

"This is with an average of four times in terms of changing the dialysis fluid which is only available at government treatment centres," she told reporters during her visit to the National Kidney Foundation dialysis centre here yesterday.



**FATIMAH** (right) presents a souvenir to an ailing patient during her visit to the National Kidney Foundation dialysis centre in Kuching.

Fatimah said that 46 percent of kidney patients in the state obtained treatment at government-run hemodialysis centres where 112 of the 314 machines

were over eight years old and needed to be replaced.

"The cost of a hemodialysis machine is RM42,000 for one machine while the allocation by

the Health Ministry for improving kidney treatment nationwide is only RM6 million annually," she said.

Fatimah urged kidney patients

to obtain the special aid introduced by the state government late last year which covered the cost of Arteriovenous Fistula (AVF) installation on a one-off basis and regulated sessions of hemodialysis, Erythropoietin (EPO) injections and CAPD.

"Before this, there is no special aid for kidney patients borne by the state government. The Social Welfare Department (JKMS) could only offer a general monthly aid of RM200 to RM300 to chronic patients monthly.

"That amount is insufficient to cover the monthly treatment costs. The aid given through JKMS will enhance the department's function in providing social aid to those in need in Sarawak so that they can live more comfortably," she said.

Also present during her visit to the centre yesterday were Community Wellbeing Assistant Minister Datuk Francis Harder Hollis, Kidney Association of Sarawak president Datuk Seri JC Fong and National Kidney Foundation chief executive officer Chua Hong Wee.