

FOR many kidney failure patients, the diagnosis signals a dramatic upheaval of their lives.

Once an energetic and sociable person, Chew (not her real name) now spends multiple times a week undergoing treatment at a National Kidney Foundation of Malaysia (NKF) dialysis centre.

Her husband has also quit his job to be her caregiver. For a couple already living a life of economic hardship in the midst of a raging Covid-19 pandemic, this is an extra blow to their income.

The stark reality is that Chew's story is not unique. Like her, more than 40,000 kidney patients currently undergo dialysis across Malaysia.

These patients have to spend four hours a day hooked up to a dialysis machine, three times a week. As such, many are unable to lead normal lives and struggle to

# Kidney foundation urges donors to step forward

gain regular employment.

"Malaysia has among the highest rates of kidney disease in the world, with over 7,000 people diagnosed with kidney failure every year," said NKF chairman Datuk Dr Zaki Morad Mohamad Zaher.

"The limited amount of donor kidneys available means that regular dialysis treatment is the only real available option for most patients.

"Since we started dialysis operations in 1993, we have delivered holistic care to over 6,000 patients of all backgrounds across the country.

"Throughout the turbulence of this pandemic, we continue to treat approximately 1,700 people at 28 dialysis centres nationwide.

"As a non-profit, the majority of our work is reliant on the generosity of our donors.

"Every year, NKF needs to raise approximately RM25mil to subsidise the cost of dialysis treatments for its patients," added Dr Zaki Morad.

With rampant job loss and limited opportunities for self-employment, NKF in May 2020 pledged RM1mil from its own coffers to offer aid to dialysis patients in need of financial assistance.

NKF also assisted Health Ministry by donating medical supplies, including surgical gowns, personal protective equipment (PPE) and face masks.

It also loaned 58 haemodialysis machines and six units of the port-

able reverse osmosis (RO) water system to the ministry, to ensure that kidney patients received proper treatment and care.

"We are thankful for all the support we have received so far — every donation received has meant the world to us.

"However, the pandemic has also affected us; many donors have ceased their donations and it has been a real struggle to keep our operations running.

"We hope more people will support us in our mission to save lives," said Dr Zaki Morad.

Alan Thoo of Sunway Damansara Metro Lions Club, who has been donating to NKF since 2009, urged more people to lend a helping hand.

"During the start of the pandemic, we raised RM23,000 in donations to provide masks and PPE to NKF so that they could safely continue treating patients," he said.

Meanwhile, Ng Yoke Chan, faculty adviser of SMK Damansara Jaya's Leo Club, said the club's long-term support of NKF had helped students learn how to reach out to others in need.

"We look forward to seeing more poor patients being helped by NKF, and a reduction in kidney failure patients in the long run," she said.

To help kidney patients receive life-saving dialysis treatment, visit [nkf.org.my/support-us/donations/](http://nkf.org.my/support-us/donations/). Alternatively, call 03-7954 9048 to learn more about the foundation's ongoing efforts.