

RISE IN KIDNEY DISEASES

PLEDGING ORGANS VIA MYSEJAHTERA?

Khairy says this is one of options mulled to boost organ donation and transplant rates

THARANYA ARUMUGAM
KUALA LUMPUR
news@nst.com.my

THE Health Ministry is mulling to enhance the MySejahtera application feature by allowing Malaysians to sign up as organ donors.

Health Minister Khairy Jamaluddin said this in view of decreasing organ donation rates in the country amid increasing

number of patients requiring transplants such as kidneys.

Kidney disease, he said, was fast becoming a major burden globally, including in Malaysia.

“Kidney disease is a common but silent and often underrecognised condition.

“The prevalence of chronic kidney disease (CKD) in our country, according to the 2011 National Health and Morbidity survey, has increased from 9.1 per cent in 2011 to 15.5 per cent in 2018.

“If left untreated, it can lead to End-Stage Kidney Disease (ESKD). This is directly related to the high prevalence of diabetes, hypertension and obesity in our population,” he said at the launch of the National Kidney Foundation of Malaysia’s 16th Annual Dialysis Conference 2022, themed “Holistic Care in Dialysis”, here yesterday.

Khairy noted that the incidence and prevalence of treated ESKD had risen markedly in the last 25 years.

The Malaysian Dialysis and Transplant Registry, he said, reported that 7,967 new patients received dialysis in 2015 and by the end of 2016, there were 39,711 patients on dialysis.

If the present trend continued unchecked, he cautioned, the number of ESKD patients was estimated to reach 106,000 by 2040.

“This burden will cost the healthcare system an estimated RM1.5 billion for CKD and RM3.2 billion for ESKD. About 8,000 new patients are diagnosed with ESKD annually, with most of them requiring dialysis.

“This makes Malaysia one of the highest nations in the world with ESKD patients per million



Health Minister Khairy Jamaluddin speaking at the launch of the National Kidney Foundation of Malaysia’s 16th Annual Dialysis Conference 2022 in Kuala Lumpur yesterday. BERNAMA PIC

population.”

Khairy said ESKD also affected the younger age group and this led to loss of livelihoods, as well as economic contribution in the country.

One of the ways to combat this, he said, was to increase awareness about kidney disease, and to prevent its onset and complications.

“Similar to preventing the onset of other major diseases, we have to live a healthy lifestyle, eat well, exercise regularly, avoid any unlicensed products or supplements, avoid stress and don’t smoke.

“If a person is unfortunate to get ESKD, it is important that he maintains a healthy lifestyle and

learns to live well with dialysis.”

Besides dialysis and prevention, Khairy said, another option for ESKD patients was a kidney transplant.

“However, the rates of organ donation and transplant in Malaysia are one of the lowest in the world, thus people on dialysis will unfortunately never get a transplant.

“The Health Ministry is therefore looking into using the MySejahtera app to make it easier for Malaysians to make a pledge to donate their organs.”

Khairy urged those at risk of getting kidney disease to go for regular check-ups and seek treatment from kidney specialists or nephrologists.