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Stringent safety protocols in place at hospitals

The Star, Malaysia

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By ASHLEY TANG
ashleytang@thestar.com.my

PETALING JAYA: Private hospitals are reassuring visitors that stringent measures are in place to prevent cross infection at their premises following the emergence of Covid-19 in the country.

For example, it was known that several patients sought treatment for their symptoms at hospitals such as the Subang Jaya Medical Centre (SJMC), Taman Desa Medical Centre (TDMC) and Pantai Hospital Kuala Lumpur prior to being confirmed positive for Covid-19.

Ramsay Sime Darby Health Care (RSDH) group chief executive officer Greg Brown said SJMC's stringent screening and safety protocol enabled the hospital to confine those affected with Covid-19 to only the emergency room (ER) area.

The first two cases were treated at SJMC's ER area, while the third case was a staff member who came into contact with the second patient in the ER.

Brown said that prior to the global Covid-19 outbreak, all RSDH hospitals – SJMC, Ara Damansara Medical Centre, and ParkCity Medical Centre – already had existing measures in place that were in compliance with inter-

national standards.

He added that as part of the ongoing safety protocols at SJMC and other RSDH hospitals, temperature screening stations had been erected at all entry points of its hospitals to ensure that all patients and visitors are thoroughly screened.

"All staff at screening stations will be wearing personal protective equipment and employees will have their temperature checked prior to entering the hospitals.

"We have also set up triage areas outside the ER where any suspected cases of Covid-19 are directed for further assessment prior to entering our facility," he said yesterday.

Brown added that hand sanitiser dispensers have also been placed across the hospital, with posters on proper hand-washing techniques and respiratory hygiene displayed prominently.

"We review our screening procedures on a regular basis as an assurance to the public that we are taking all necessary measures to provide a safe environment for our employees, patients and visitors," he said.

TDMC's marketing manager, Toh Lu Yee, said the hospital now limits entry points as well as requires visitors to go through temperature screening.

"Those who enter the premises

have to wear a mask whether they are a patient or a visitor. We limit visitors too, especially young children," she said.

Toh added that masks as well as hand sanitisers are being provided for all visitors at its entry points.

She said the hospital has disinfected patient-centric areas while it has also identified healthcare workers who had been in contact with the sole patient who was found to be Covid-19 positive.

"They have also been screened and are currently under quarantine," she said.

Following three confirmed Covid-19 cases at PHKL, its chief executive officer Erica Lam said the hospital had taken all preventive measures, including limiting entry points and implementing a triage system, to ensure that the hospital remains a safe place.

Meanwhile, Malaysian Medical Association president Dr N. Ganabaskaran said the public should not be afraid to seek medical attention from healthcare facilities as healthcare professionals have been trained and are prepared in the event they encounter any cases of Patients Under Investigation.

Ganabaskaran said hospitals were currently following guidelines for infectious disease prevention

and control set by the Health Ministry.

"Everyone visiting a hospital is scanned upon entering, and these steps help reduce the risk of infection.

"If anyone has flu-like symptoms, they must be upfront as well and disclose important information, such as whether they have travelled overseas recently, and to which destination. This is also part of the scanning procedure," said Ganabaskaran, who added it was also important for the public to stay informed with information from the right channels.

"The right information may be able to allay some public fear. Many of these fears are the result of misinformation and fake news that are being circulated.

"Some may have even shared information with good intentions without knowing whether the information was reliable and credible. We hope the media can play a bigger role in educating the public on how to verify news and information," he said.

Ganabaskaran added that the public can obtain verified information from the Health Ministry's website as well as to contact the Crisis Preparedness and Response Centre for medical advice.



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SUMMARIES

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