Course aims to enhance emergency dept

KOTA KINABALU: The Sabah Trauma Life Support (STLS) provider course aims to beef up the State’s emergency dept.

Established four years ago, the Emergency Medicine Society of Kota Kinabalu with the expert assistance of CareFlight New South Wales and funding from the Australia Malaysia International Foundation (AMIF) and the Sabah Women’s and Children’s Hospital (SWCH) has been working hard in tandem to tackle the local problems that are faced by health care providers here through STLS.

According to Health Department director Dr Christina Randri, this compact and practical course covers essential aspects of pre-hospital care and patient transport, basic trauma & disaster management, airway & resuscitation and transport safety tailored to the local needs.

She said there are 23 government hospitals throughout the State, Lawas in Sarawak and Labuan.

"Teachorous terrains of rugged highlands and thick vegetation surround these hospitals, making land travel or in the health care’s instance, inter-hospital patient transfer by ambulance a logistical nightmare."

"In spite of the availability of specialist care in secondary and tertiary health care centres in Sabah, there are patients who die during transfer from the district to these centres," she said in her speech at the opening ceremony of STLS at Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM) Form yesterday.

Her speech was delivered by Health Department assistant director (medical) Dr Zuraidah Ahmad Bally.

She pointed out that health care workers need to face challenging environments when transferring a patient from the district health centre.

"We also have staff who fall sick and start vomiting while escorting patients due to the winding roads," she said.

She added that on average, it will take more or less three hours to get from a district hospital to the closest hospital with specialist.

The STLS course is one of the pre-requisites prior to deployment of the Emergency Retrieval Unit (ERU), a highly skilled group of well-trained individuals in the field of transport and aviation medicine.

"The squad comprises of an emergency physician, medical officers and assistant medical officers of the Emergency & Trauma Department, Sabah Women, and Children’s Hospital."

Over the last year, the ERU has been working closely with the Society of Acromedicine Malaysia (SAMM). It has also added that last year, more than 900,000 patients have registered at the emergency department at 23 hospitals statewide.

The three day course (April 22-24) is held at UiTM Mengabat with a total of 26 participants (health care providers) aiming to improve health services.

The Fire Services Department and Police Air Wing are also working together to provide a well rounded training for the participants.

"We are also working together to provide a well rounded training for the participants."

Also present were UiTM deputy rector research (academic & alumni network) Dr Rozita @ UU Mohamed, Sabah Women & Children’s Hospital director Dr Tan Bee Hwa and head department of Emergency & Trauma-cum-squad leader ERU at Sabah Women & Children’s Hospital Dr Cheah Phee Kheng.