

Centre for special-needs kidney patients by year-end

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A NEW facility will be opened by the end of the year for kidney patients with multiple medical problems, such as heart disease, who require a greater level of care than what is available at most dialysis centres in the heartlands.

The latter lack resources such as a resident doctor and emergency medical facilities. And this makes it risky for charities like the Kidney Dialysis Foundation (KDF) to take on high-dependency patients, as they require more nursing care and monitoring – “not because we don’t want to”, said KDF chairman Gordon Ku.

“These are patients with multiple medical problems apart from kidney failure. They are best treated in a hospital environment, with full medical and nursing facilities, and not in a satellite dialysis centre,” added Dr Ku.

This category of patients – particularly those with financial problems – make up a “sizeable” number now and is likely to grow, given the ageing population. Hence, the new facility by the KDF and its partner, which Dr



HELP FOR PATIENTS: Dr Vivian Balakrishnan (left) chats with a dialysis patient at the opening of the KDF’s new dialysis centre in Ghim Moh.

KIDNEY CHARITIES TO MERGE?

THE Kidney Dialysis Foundation (KDF) is open to merging with other charities that help kidney patients, its founder and chairman Gordon Ku said.

Suggestions have cropped up from the public about such mergers for cost-savings for kidney patients. The National Kidney Foundation’s chairman, Mr Gerard Ee, had also floated this idea to TODAY earlier.

Remarking that it “makes good sense” if all the kidney foundations in Singapore can combine their funding and manpower, Dr Ku said: “It is in fact good to reduce the number of kidney foundations because this is not doing business to compete to make more money. This is to compete to do good.”

Ku declined to reveal.

The new centre will be “in a semi-hospital setting”, he added.

Currently, the Singapore General Hospital and the National University Hospital have their own dialysis treatment units, with the latter serving both in- and out-patients.

The KDF opened a dialysis centre in Ghim Moh yesterday, its third centre in Singapore. Funding for the centre’s initial set-up and running costs, as well as subsidies for dialysis treatment and patient care for the next few years, were paid for by a \$5-million donation from the Tan Sri Khoo

Teck Puat estate.

The charity has helped more than 390 patients since it was formed in 1996 and currently serves about 222 patients. Some 81 per cent of its patients pay less than \$400 per month, as compared to the full dialysis fee of around \$2,000 a month.