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# Pushing for more dialysis clinics

Health Ministry focuses on opening centres nationwide

**PUTRAJAYA:** The Health Ministry is pushing a new policy focusing on opening up more haemodialysis centres nationwide, as the country faces a rising number of patients with chronic renal disease.

Those suffering from end-stage renal disease had more than tripled in the past decade, with 26,159 patients undergoing treatment in 2011 compared to just 7,837 in 2001, minister Datuk Seri Liow Tiong Lai said.

"We want to set up haemodialysis centres in health clinics that have the space to spare.

"However, we don't have enough money so the ministry will apply

for extra funds from the Finance Ministry," he told a press conference after receiving haemodialysis machines donated by Lembaga Tabung Haji.

As at 2011, Liow said there were 7,088 haemodialysis machines in public, private and NGO-run centres.

The Government has also approved 150 new haemodialysis machines that will be distributed to 69 government hospitals this year.

Liow declined to give specific figures on how many more machines were needed to best serve patients nationwide.

Instead, he said that it would

depend on how much funding was allocated to them.

Earlier, Lembaga Tabung Haji presented 41 haemodialysis machines worth RM1.68mil to the ministry as part of its corporate social responsibility drive.

On a separate issue, Liow said that the MCA had no qualms with Chinese associations approaching Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak directly for help to resolve their problems.

Liow, who is also MCA deputy president, said that the party was more than happy if Chinese associations could receive help from the Prime Minister.



**Reaching out:** Liow visiting a patient after receiving haemodialysis machines from Lembaga Tabung Haji at the Putrajaya hospital. Looking on are Lembaga Tabung Haji Chairman Tan Sri Abi Musa As'ari and CEO Datuk Ismee Ismail.