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TNB lights up lives with IJN Foundation

By Adela Megan Willy

The principal cause of death in Malaysia between 2005 and 2014 was ischemic heart disease, or coronary artery disease, according to data from the Statistics Department Malaysia. Ischemic heart disease is caused by the inadequate supply of blood to the heart. In 2014, the highest number of deaths from heart disease was recorded, accounting for 13.5% of total deaths.

Adding to the stress for the patient and his or her family is the lack of accommodation when relatives accompany the patient to hospital during treatment.

The *Edge Financial Daily* has learnt that the National Heart Institute (IJN) often sees those accompanying patients sleeping on chairs and even on the floor of the lobby.

In an effort to make overnight stays at the institute less daunting and tiring, electricity utility company Tenaga Nasional Bhd (TNB) and IJN Foundation — the charitable arm of IJN — recently teamed up to expand the cardiovascular and thoracic health centre's guest dormitory.

The dormitory, which was set up in 2010, could accommodate 25 individuals and had only three bathrooms. However, as the number of inpatients grew over the years, there was a demand for a larger guest space.

"Many of the guests are from underprivileged backgrounds and travel long distances to be with their loved ones. It is a humanitarian policy of IJN that we make sure not just the patients but their family members are more comfortable," IJN Foundation chair Toh Puan Dr Aishah Ong told reporters at the official launch of the "Better Brighter Dormitory" on Tuesday.

She said IJN Foundation's expenditure grows every year due to the increase in the number of patients as well as the rising cost of medicine and medical devices.

IJN Foundation carries out IJN's corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives to provide monetary assistance to heart patients who cannot afford medical aid.

"In 2016, we spent RM3.9 million on patient care alone, caring for 157 patients — 80 adults and 77 children. This year, our expenditure is going to be more. As at September, we had spent RM2.9 million," Aishah said.

"These are patients who cannot afford to pay for their medical expenses, be they self-employed, unemployed, not civil servants or the uninsured. So to make things better, we do our part to ease things for their family members by providing better accommodation," she added.

That being said, the refurbishment of the guest dormitory and its future expansion — when the demand arises — is a large financial commitment. IJN Foundation depends mostly on contributions from its corporate partners and the public.

"We get the bulk of our funds from our corporate partners and friends. We also write to large companies, politely requesting for us to be included as a recipient when they form their own charities," Aishah said.

TNB has pledged RM1.4 million for a period of five years. Of this, RM390,000 has been used to refurbish the dormitory. It is also committing RM200,000 a year until 2021 for the facility's operation and maintenance costs.

The improvements sponsored by TNB include increasing the number of rooms, dou-



Photos by Suhaimi Yusof



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01. (From left) Datuk Zainal Abidin Puteh, Aishah, Sakthivel, and TNB chief corporate officer Datuk Wira Roslan Ab Rahman at the official opening. Looking on are IJN chairman Tan Sri Mohd Nasir Mohd Ashraf (behind Sakthivel) and IJN CEO Datuk Seri Mohd Azhari Yakub (behind Aishah).

02. Subhadevi: I not only saved money by not having to put up outside of the hospital but it was easier for me to visit [my mother].

03. Masrizah: I found out about this dormitory simply by asking the hospital's information counter about the nearest hotel.

ble-decker beds, cabinets and other furniture, as well as additional shower rooms and toilets.

IJN charges daily rates for the accommodation, depending on the unit type. Guests opting for single beds are charged RM20 per night, double-decker beds are RM10 and family rooms can be rented for RM50 per night.

"The 'Better Brighter Dormitory' project is a joint pilot project by the IJN Foundation and TNB, which began in March last year, when we received an application from the IJN Foundation to finance the upgrading and operation of this dormitory," TNB's independent non-executive director Datuk Sakthivel Alagappan said.

"For us at TNB, apart from assisting with the development of the country's economy by ensuring continuous supply of electricity, our mission is also to ensure people are able to live and enjoy

a comfortable life," Sakthivel said.

It is worth noting that TNB was a winner in the *The Edge* Billion Ringgit Club awards in August for having the best CSR initiatives, in the Super Big Cap. Above RM40 billion Market Capitalisation category. It also won The Highest Growth in Profit After Tax over three years (in the Super Big Cap category).

Other than its collaboration with IJN Foundation, TNB has a variety of CSR initiatives, including the Lampu Jalan Kampung project, a continuous effort to brighten up more rural areas throughout the country; education assistance in the form of scholarships and loans through its subsidiary, Yayasan Tenaga Nasional; and its PINTAR school adoption programme.

"It is befitting [that we are actively engaged in CSR] given our role as a company entrusted by the government with emphasising the well-being of the public by practising and nurturing the concept of 'sharing' within the community," Sakthivel said.

The family members of several inpatients told *The Edge Financial Daily* of their experi-

ences staying overnight in the new dormitory. For 30-year-old Subhadevi Manogaran, the availability of a dormitory and its amenities made her stay at IJN while tending to her mother much more comfortable.

"My mother was admitted for a coronary angiogram on Sunday and I have to be constantly by her side. She will be discharged later today [Tuesday]. I not only saved money by not having to put up outside of the hospital but it was easier for me to visit her," she said.

Masrizah Halim, who is from Kedah, has been staying at IJN for the past week. She finds the dormitory a good place to rest while caring for her father, who has been admitted for bypass surgery.

"I found out about this dormitory simply by asking the hospital's information counter about the nearest hotel," she said.

Harnani Hamidon, who is married with a child, said juggling her parental duties along with taking care of her father would have been difficult if not for the availability of a family room.

"My husband and I take turns to visit my father and, at the same time, care for our child. Thankfully, this dormitory has family rooms, which is very convenient," she said.

The provision of affordable accommodation is a great help for the families of inpatients in a highly stressful situation, worrying about a loved one who is seriously ill as well as the high medical costs.

Aishah: Many of the guests are from underprivileged backgrounds and travel long distances to be with their loved ones.

