

# The new world of telehealth



ACCESS to healthcare services and information is a concern that has led to the venture known as telehealth.

Under this initiative, hospitals are equipped with multimedia technology to facilitate virtual healthcare services such as tele-consultation, health online, lifelong learning and lifetime health record services.

The aim of tele-consultation services is to ensure specialist medical care services are also provided to community and rural clinics. Tele-consultation provides links between hospitals and the primary care facilities, connecting doctors and patients.

With tele-consultation, patients need not be physically present to see a specialist as they have online access to the diagnosis and medical history of remote patients. The system also enables an exchange of views between doctors from several locations on treating a patient.

Currently 41 public

hospitals across the country are linked by telemedicine systems that provide tele-consultation services. Among the hospitals are Kuala Lumpur Hospital, Penang Hospital, Tengku Ampuan Rahimah Hospital in Klang, Ipoh Hospital, Kangar Hospital, Kuala Terengganu Hospital, Johor Hospital, Seremban's Tuanku Ja'afar Hospital and Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Sabah.

To create awareness and educate the general public on health and well-being, the MOH has set up the MYHEALTH portal ([www.myhealth.gov.my](http://www.myhealth.gov.my)) that offers a wide range of health information. Anyone with Internet connection can access the portal to learn about diseases, ailments

and treatments. The portal has an encyclopaedic format and forums where individuals can discuss health issues with experts.

Lifelong learning services have also been incorporated under the telehealth initiative to enable professional development opportunities for healthcare providers. Services such as modular distance learning, virtual library, monitoring and evaluation of continuing professional development ensures that healthcare providers are kept up-to-date on healthcare and treatment.

As for the lifetime health record services, it aims to provide healthcare professionals with up-to-date health and medical history of patients.