

## **CLINICAL RESEARCH MALAYSIA TARGETS GNI OF RM578 MILLION AND 1,000 NEW JOBS BY 2020**

-With a total 939 successfully completed trials and 784 new and ongoing trial in the country-

**Kuala Lumpur, 18 July 2017** – The Ministry of Health aspires to move from 100 ongoing clinical trials in 2009 to 1,000 new and ongoing clinical trials by 2020<sup>1</sup>. To enable these goals, Clinical Research Malaysia (CRM) was established within the Ministry of Health (MOH) to spearhead the development and complete the ecosystem of the clinical research industry in Malaysia. Clinical research is driven by Clinical Research Malaysia (CRM), which positions Malaysia as a preferred global destination for industry sponsored research (ISR). During the years, CRM has reached a crucial juncture with the introduction of Phase 1 clinical trials in Malaysia marking the country's move higher up the clinical trial value chain. CRM aims to deliver a Gross National Income (GNI) of RM 578 million and create 1,000 skilled jobs in the clinical research industry by 2020<sup>1</sup>.

Since CRM's inception, it has conducted more than 939 industry sponsored researches (ISR) which have given medical professionals the opportunities to be involved in clinical trials. Through these secured ISR, the cumulated investment brought into the country from 2012 to 2016 has totalled over RM 196 million. It shows a substantial increase of RM71 million from 2015 despite the decline in the number of trials conducted. CRM has also increased the number of feasibility studies by 122.5% in 2016 in comparison to 2015 and had recorded a 294% increase in the number of new companies including sponsors – which include pharmaceutical, biologics and medical devices companies as well as Contract Research Organisations (CRO). In addition, 1,491 skilled jobs were created within the clinical research industry in 2016, exceeding the targeted 1,000 CRM was initially set to achieve by 2020.

Dr. Akhmal Yusof, Chief Executive Officer of CRM said, “to succeed, we must reshape the clinical research value chain and address some of the fundamental issues limiting higher quality clinical trials. With the steps that we have taken to plug the capability gaps that will enable us to conduct Phase I trials as well as enhancing the existing capabilities in late phase trials, we are confident we will be able to offer services along the entire spectrum of drug and medical device development”.

Patients who participate in clinical trials may benefit from receiving an investigational drug that is not available to people outside the trial. In addition, they may receive treatment from a clinical trial team that provides careful oversight of their medical condition. There are cases where clinical trial patients with a disease do somewhat better than people in a similar stage of their disease who are not enrolled regardless of whether the experimental treatment works. This is due to the general high quality of care provided during the trial process<sup>2</sup>.

To ensure patients receive the best standard of care and their interest are taken care of a centralised ethics committee known as Medical Research & Ethics Committee of the MOH (MREC) will carefully review and approve the clinical trial before it can be implemented. The ethics committee which is made up of a group of scientific and non-scientific experts in various specialities ensures that a clinical trial have legitimate medical purpose, is safe for participants and will benefit them. Many participants report great satisfaction in playing a key role in advancing medical sciences and helping scientists find new treatments that will help more people live longer and healthier lives<sup>3</sup>.

Dr. Akhmal said, “one of the biggest obstacles to the successful completion of clinical trials is finding volunteers to participate in the research which leads to delays in the timely approval of new medicines for the patients who need them. It has been reported a significant number of investigators fail to meet patient enrollment requirement for a given trial due to various factors in which some of them we have addressed”.

To overcome the challenges, CRM launched the “I AM AWARE” campaign to raise awareness on the importance of clinical trials, to enhance understanding of the benefits and risks of participation in clinical trials and to provide resources to help individuals make informed decisions<sup>3</sup>. The roadshows were held at 33 Ministry of Health (MOH) hospitals and three universities, with close to 2,500 patients and volunteers from various public and private hospitals, as well as universities were successfully registered.

Moving forward, CRM plans to expand its horizons through the Phase 1 Realization Project (P1RP) to attract Phase 1 clinical trials into Malaysia that may result in a spill-over of later phase trials into the country. These accomplishments are taking Malaysia closer to the goal of being a preferred destination for clinical research<sup>4</sup>.

### **About CRM**

Clinical Research Malaysia (CRM) is a non-profit company set up by the Ministry of Health in 2012, which has been working towards creating a supportive ecosystem to grow clinical research in the country. Since CRM’s inception, it has conducted more than 900 industry sponsored research (ISR), which have given local medical practitioners the opportunity to be involved in clinical trials. More importantly, it plays a critical role in bringing access to the latest medicines and technology to Malaysians.

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## **Reference**

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<sup>1</sup> Economic Transformation Programme: A Roadmap for Malaysia, Chapter 16: Creating Wealth Through Excellence in Healthcare, last viewed on 17 May 2017, <http://www.moh.gov.my/images/gallery/ETP/NKEA%20Penjagaan%20Kesehatan.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Alzheimer's association, Alzheimer's Disease Clinical Trials – Myths vs. Facts, last viewed on 17 May 2017, [http://www.alz.org/research/clinical\\_trials/myth\\_vs\\_fact.asp](http://www.alz.org/research/clinical_trials/myth_vs_fact.asp)

<sup>3</sup> Clinical Research Malaysia, I AM AWARE, last viewed on 17 May 2017, <http://www.clinicalresearch.my/v1/iamaware/patient-volunteer-faq/>

<sup>4</sup> Malaysia's Clinical Research Ecosystem, Clinical Research Malaysia, last viewed on 29 May 2017 <http://www.clinicalresearch.my/v1/malaysias-clinical-research-ecosystem/>