

# Launching of telemedicine system planned

## RECORDER REPORT

**KARACHI:** In order to ensure provision of better healthcare facilities to masses, the health department would launch telemedicine system in all districts of the province.

Initially, the project was launched in March 2005 with the name of "Hope" in districts Nawabshah, Hyderabad, Larkana, Badin and Sukkur while Karachi was the hub of this project, sources at the health department told Business Recorder on Thursday.

They said that Engro Chemicals supported the project and Dr. Rasheed Juma has started this project that was the director of Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Centre (JPMC) presently Director General (DG) Health, Sindh. Keeping in view the importance of this project, the Government of Sindh (GoS) has decided to launch this project throughout the province.

The sources said that as per plan, the government has decided to make Benazir Medical University (BMU), previously known as Chandka Medical College (CMC), Larkana, Liaquat Hospital, Hyderabad and Civil Hospital Karachi (CHK) as the main offices of this project.

They said that the department had prepared the feasibility report and would hold committee meeting on November 28, (today), to finalise the proposed draft. After discussion on proposed draft, the committee would recommend it for approval from provincial government, they said.

They said that the government has also decided to launch this program with the help of satellite because Internet is not a reliable source. For this purpose, the committee has also invited the representative of Pak-Sat (the national satellite) to share their ideas, they said.

They said that with the help of this technique the specialised doctors can examine the patients, sitting far away from their offices and recommend other doctors who would be sitting at their districts as, how to treat the concerned patient.

They said that telemedicine system would provide latest facilities to people living in rural and far-flung areas and their approach to expert doctors would be made easier. Provision of latest health facilities to people of Sindh was the priority of the government, they said.

They said that six centres have already been working under this project and people are getting facilities in their respective areas. The government wanted to introduce telemedicine system in all 23 districts of Sindh, they said.

They said that with the help of this technique scans of pathology samples, ECGs, EEGs and other diagnostic systems used to determine a preliminary diagnosis could be conducted easily.

They said that there are some concerns, though, that it might lead to dangerous misdiagnosis and even those in the industry admit that regulation hasn't caught up with technology when it comes to medical malpractice, ethics and legal liability.

They said that liability, privacy and malpractice issues pose challenges as this new industry expands without a supporting international regulatory framework as well as an ethical code of conduct.

They told that telemedicine was a new method in modern treatment, which would provide information about various diseases, their symptoms and treatment.

They said there is acute shortage of expert doctors in the province because no doctor from urban areas wants to go in rural areas of Sindh to perform their duties even though many of them belong to rural areas of province. The latest technique would ensure provision of health facilities to every person of province, he said.

They said that with the help of this technique, the government would be able to provide basic health facilities to every resident of province and besides it would prove helpful to save the salaries of paramedics and facilitate the people belonging to far-flung areas of province to avail medical facilities at their doorstep.

They said that with the help of this technology, the government would be able to provide facilities of telecardiology, telepathology, teledermatology, telepathology and robotic telesurgery.

They said that the first and the foremost requirement here is a qualified doctor at the other end. He said that the government is working to appoint qualified doctors at the other end to make this technology successful.