



Dr Toh (left) with Zairil and other representatives from Digital Music unveil plans for the fundraising event.

# Concert to boost hospital fund

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GEORGE TOWN — In conjunction with the 30th anniversary of Digital Music, a fundraising charity concert will be held at the Dewan Sri Pinang on Nov 27 in aid of the Dr J. Earl Gardner Fund, which benefits patients suffering from complications related to ear, nose, throat, kidney, cleft lip, scoliosis and other serious ailments.

The fund is named after Penang Adventist Hospital founder, who started his humble clinic in Muntri Street in 1924.

The fund, which was set-up in 2005

and managed by the hospital, has helped many underprivileged patients receive medical treatment.

The hospital's chief executive officer Dr Wesley Toh See Wei said the fund is running low and they hope to raise RM200,000 through the charity concert.

"Last year, the fund disbursed RM255,637 and this is part of RM2,074,292 medical disbursement from collective funds made available at Penang Adventist Hospital to help underprivileged patients undergo major surgeries."

Also present was Bukit Bendera MP Zairil Khir Johari, who pledged a personal donation of RM2,000.

"The hospital has been serving the community for the past 92 years since its

inception and its mission has always been helping the poor.

"I applaud Digital Music for exercising its corporate social responsibility for the not-for-profit programme," said Zairil.

"In 1924 a young American couple travelled 13,000km across the ocean and opened the first Seven-Day Adventist clinic in pre-war Malaya," said Dr Toh.

"Gardner and wife Dr Ethel Sawing-Gardner were medical graduates of Loma Linda University in the US."

He added that Gardner had received further training from the Royal College of Physicians (London) and the Royal College of Surgeons (Edinburgh).

"Their clinic was called 'Mission Clinic' and they treated patients regardless of race, creed

and social status.

"There was also a sign in the clinic which read 'Poor Treated Free'.

"Due to the clinic's overwhelming response, the couple established a hospital along Burnmah Road in 1929 which is now called Penang Adventist Hospital and the kind doctor worked there until 1939," said Dr Toh.

The Gardners eventually returned to the US in 1939 to settle down in the small town of Ukiah in California.

There, Gardner continued to practice for well over 40 years.

For the concert, some 120 children and teachers will showcase their talents.

Tickets are available at RM30, RM60, RM120 and RM200. For details, call 04-222 7606/7644.

## Volunteers needed for diabetes study

By Paul Toh  
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GEORGE TOWN — In conjunction with World Diabetes Day last Tuesday, it was an opportune time to remind the public on the importance of early screening and prevention.

The International Diabetes Federation has described diabetes as an immense global challenge and in Malaysia, where almost one in five of people over 30 has been diagnosed with the disease, this challenge is especially acute.

A conference titled "Studies of Epigenetic Biomarkers of Impaired Glucose Regulation and Progression to Type-2-Diabetes

(T2DM)" was held at the Penang Adventist Hospital recently.

"We hope the outcome of this study will have a real impact on the quality of life for Malaysians living with and at risk of type-2 diabetes," said Oxford BioDynamics Malaysia director Dr Lim Chun Ren.

Among other speakers were hospital chief executive officer Dr Wesley Toh See Wei, Oxford BioDynamics UK chief executive officer Christian Hoyer Millar, Hospital Seberang Jaya chief endocrinologist Dr Ang Hock Aun, Diabetes Malaysia chairman Dr Dicky Ng Teik Kee and Dr Lee Yew Fong who represented Deputy Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Hilmi Yahaya.

Oxford BioDynamics is sponsoring the study and will be working with Hospital

Seberang Jaya, Penang Adventist Hospital and Diabetes Malaysia (Penang) to recruit patients for the study.

The study will look at the development of diabetes among 480 Malaysians over a two-year period. Using data from the study, the organisation will develop a test to provide a prognosis for people at risk of and suffering from the disease.

The company expects the tool to be available to doctors in 2019.

"Most clinical studies involving type-2 diabetes are mainly biochemical and we are particularly excited now to collaborate with Oxford BioDynamics to study the epigenetic aspect of the disease," said Dr Ang.

The study will take baseline measurement of participants' glucose regulation and

separate them into four groups based on their glucose levels, health, pre-diabetic, untreated diabetic and patients being treated for diabetes.

At each stage of the trials, patients will provide a 15ml blood sample taken at the health clinic where they are recruited.

The frozen samples will be delivered to the Oxford BioDynamics research facility in Penang where a profile of chromatin conformation signatures will be constructed and added to their definition in the glucose levels stratification.

Volunteers aged between 30 and 70 who wish to participate in the study can call 04-892 0699 or visit 118-04-09, Island Plaza, Jalan Tanjung Tokong on weekdays between 9am and 5pm.