

New medical certification centre to open in January

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Dubai: A medical fitness certification centre that can process 5,000 residency applicants daily will start functioning in January, aiming at easing the nightmare that has become the medical certification process.

Shaikh Hamdan Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Deputy Ruler of Dubai and UAE Finance Minister and Head of **Department of Health and Medical Services {Dohms}**, opened the Al Muhaisna Centre located in Sonapur in Ghusais.

Among its many facilities are vaccination rooms, isolation rooms for infectious diseases, and immigration department counters processing visa applications and laboratory.

Long queues and bitter complaints have been common at government medical centres after the UAE announced new health requirements in July, banning private medical centres and municipality centres from conducting the tests.

Qadhi Saeed Al Murooshid, director-general, told reporters the centre would be able to handle quiet a number of medical fitness examinations.

"We can process up to 5,000 applications daily. Beginning in 2009, services [at Maktoum Hospital will be shut down and transferred here. Other primary healthcare centres will still conduct the tests, but this centre will be the hub," he said.

Dohms currently processes 3,000 applications a day at its primary healthcare centres such as the Satwa, Al Khawaneej, Safa and Al Twar centres.

Maisa Al Bustani, director of the medical fitness department at Dohms, said the department would start accepting a limited number of applications at the centre in January.

"We are in slow transition until everything is up and running. First, we will have all the major companies coming here," she said.

She added that they decided on such an approach to ensure that all the facilities were working properly.

Other than medical fitness services, the centre also houses a morgue, which will take over the burden of embalming bodies for transportation from the Maktoum Hospital.

Major diseases

Newcomers have to be tested for several diseases including HIV/Aids, tuberculosis and Hepatitis B. All those who test positive for these diseases will be deported.

Residents renewing their residency will only be tested for HIV/Aids.

Those who are Hepatitis B-negative and working in six professions including housemaids, nannies, cooks and drivers are required to be vaccinated against the virus. The cost of the three shots is Dh30.

Those who test positive for syphilis will be treated and not deported unless the sponsor requests as such.

{Zawya}