

Upgrade or lose licence, says Moh

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Licences of hospitals and medical labs across the country will not be renewed by the Ministry of Health if they fail to upgrade their infrastructure, a senior official has revealed.

They must implement the latest systems and practices that meet international standards within three years, Dr Amin Al Amiri, CEO of Medical Practices and Licences, told healthcare professionals.

He said the ministry had signed a contract with an international accreditation body that would certify hospitals and laboratories. He declined to name the institution.

"Within one to three years all laboratories and hospitals in the UAE will have to be accredited by the international body to get their licences renewed. In the long run, clinics, medical professionals, nurses and technicians will have to be accredited."

The UAE is competing for a share of the growing medical tourism sector. Dr Al Amiri, speaking at the second Middle East Healthcare Expansion Conference in Dubai, said: "About 70 per cent of healthcare services in the UAE is provided by the private sector. There is a need for continuous development of hospital infrastructure, professional standards and technology. The ministry will not renew the licences of hospitals and laboratories that fail to obtain accreditation from the international body."

The country is gearing up for the introduction of a compulsory medical insurance system that will require the accreditation of hospitals, labs and medical professionals.

Accreditation is also necessary for the growth of the medical tourism sector. The introduction of an integrated health information system will require hospitals to be more transparent about treatment costs and medical details, and all medical mistakes and errors will be recorded.

Hospitals and other healthcare businesses will have to digitalise their patient records and billing systems so that a patient's details will be accessible by all other hospitals in the network. The accreditation rule will apply to both the private and government sectors.

Accreditation is a process in which hospitals have to pay the inspection body to carry out its visits and must upgrade their infrastructure in line with set standards.

(ZAwya)