



### *The management of public health problem on Koh Pha-ngan*

Koh Pha-ngan is a district in Surat Thani province. It's located approximately 100 kilometers from Surat Thani city area, spanning 168 square kilometers. Koh Pha-ngan is very popular as a natural attraction among Thais and foreigners. Its Full Moon Party annually attracts 1.1M tourists and generates 2,000MB income to the country. However, a public health service on the island is still under demands of local people and tourists because there is only one hospital, Koh Pha-ngan hospital. Such, it requires to improve this hospital's readiness in providing healthcare and referral services.

The Pha-ngan hospital had formerly served at 10 beds and now becomes serving at 30 beds. Its major problem is a budget that is allocated upon a number of residences on Koh Pha-ngan, without giving a consideration on a large number of tourists who also obtain its healthcare services. So, the budget allocation is not corresponded to the demand of public health service. Especially, the Koh Pha-ngan hospital – that provides healthcare services to either Thais and foreigners – must improve its readiness in terms of patient rooms, recent and efficient models of medical equipment, and a patient referral system. Moreover, Koh Pha-ngan hospital has allotted part of its budget and resources to Koh Tao hospital which is a small size of hospital in Koh Pha-ngan district and is still unapproved for a hospital code and a direct budget allocation. This causes Koh Pha-ngan hospital's budget shortage that leads the residences to request for justice from the Ombudsman to solve above problem.

The Ombudsman has been mindful that the public health service problem is the major problem which must be urgently addressed in order to level up an efficiency of State's public health services. Then, he made a site visit to learn about the problem, to discuss with related agencies and had following suggestions on Koh Pha-ngan's public health services:

1. Establishing Koh Pha-ngan Hospital Foundation to serve as a source of fund for an improvement of medical equipment and patient service area for the better healthcare services. The foundation has been successfully established since February 26, 2020.



2. Requesting an approval on a hospital code for Koh Tao hospital in order to discharge Koh Pha-nagn hospital from supporting budget and resources to Koh Tao hospital. Currently, Koh Tao hospital has been successfully granted its hospital code and is eligible to its own allotted budget and resources.

With an establishment of Koh Pha-ngan Hospital Foundation, the hospital has been granted funds to acquire recent models of medical equipment, to improve hospital facilities and properties, and to support other hospital improvement projects for the better patient services to Thais and foreigners. This includes an implementation of latest technologies to reduce waiting period and errors, to increase satisfaction, and to level up its services as a smart hospital; for example, the installation of Thermoscan, Kiosk, ER door scan system, IPD negative pressure, IPD paperless to lessen paper usage, medicine delivery system, automatic medication dispensing vehicle, and using an application in processing services e.g., “BMS Patient Consent & BMS OPD Registry” application that allows the patients to register for services in advance and to input patient data including symptoms before arrival on site. This helps the patient to access hospital services in shorter timeframe.

The ombudsman has assigned Investigation Bureau 4 to make a site visit and to follow up an execution on the ombudsman’s decision and recommendations about resolving public health problems for residences and tourists on Koh Pha-ngan. The finding reveals that Kho Pha-ngan hospital has now become more equipped to provide public healthcare services to residences and tourists and is able to well manage its allotted budget. Its healthcare services generate income at approximately 10 – 20 MB per year and is able to be a studied model to efficiently resolve problem in other areas.