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KUALA LUMPUR, SEPT 8 (BERNAMA) - NO DOCTOR CAN SEPARATE HIMSELF FROM THE INTEREST AND WELFARE OF HIS COMMUNITY DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER, DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SAID TODAY.

HE SAID +THIS IS EVEN MORE SO WITH THE GENERAL PRACTITIONER WITH INTIMATE AND CONTINUING LINKS WITH THE FAMILY AND THE COMMUNITY.

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR WHO WAS OPENING THE REGIONAL CONFERENCE OF COLLEGES OF GENERAL PRACTITIONERS HERE, SAID HE HOPED THAT THE MALAYSIAN COLLEGE OF GENERAL PRACTITIONERS WOULD STRESS THIS RESPONSIBILITY IN THEIR EDUCATION PROGRAMME PARTICULARLY IN THE RURAL AREAS.

GENERAL PRACTICE, HE SAID, IS THE AREA OF MEDICINE MOST DIRECTLY RELEVANT TO THE HEALTH NEEDS OF THE MAJORITY OF THE PEOPLE.

IN FACT, THE ONLY CONTACT THAT THE VAST MAJORITY OF PEOPLE HAVE WITH THE HEALTH SERVICE IS THROUGH A PRACTITIONER OR PRIMARY CARE. -- BERNAMA MORE 1146/1B

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+FOR THIS REASON, THE EFFICIENCY AND COMPETENCE OF SERVICE AT THIS LEVEL IS OF PARAMOUNT IMPORTANCE,+ HE ADDED.

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR SAID HE WAS PLEASSED TO KNOW OF THE GROWING AWARENESS OF THE IMPORTANCE OF PRIMARY CARE IN MALAYSIA AND THAT THE ESTABLISHMENT OF ITS COLLEGE OF GENERAL PRACTITIONERS IS A MILESTONE IN THE PROGRESS OF HEALTH CARE IN THIS COUNTRY.

THE COLLEGE HE SAID, HAS ALREADY MADE PROPOSALS REGARDING TRAINING OF DOCTORS TO EQUIP THEM TO RENDER EFFICIENT SERVICES IN THE RURAL HEALTH CENTRES WHICH IS ONE OF MALAYSIA'S PROUDEST ACHIEVEMENT.

HE ADDED THAT WITH THE PRESENT EMPHASIS BY THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH ON RURAL HEALTH SERVICE, MALAYSIA COULD EXPECT TO SEE MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS IN THIS AREA. -- BERNAMA MORE 1158/1B

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EARLIER, THE PRESIDENT OF THE MALAYSIAN COLLEGE OF GENERAL PRACTITIONERS, TAN SRI DATUK DR. MOHD. DIN, SAID THAT A COMPONENT OF PRIMARY CARE IS INTEGRATED WITHIN THE RURAL HEALTH SERVICES OF THE COUNTRY.

HOWEVER, THAT THERE IS A DEFICIENCY IN THE ART OF PRIMARY CARE AMONG THE PERSONNEL.

HE SAID THIS WAS APPLICABLE TO SERVICES IN THE OUTPATIENT DEPARTMENTS OF MANY DISTRICT AND GENERAL HOSPITALS.

TAN SRI DATUK MOHD. DIN NOTED THAT A GREATER INTEREST IN GENERAL PRACTICE HAD BEEN DEVELOPED IN THE MORE ADVANCED AND DEVELOPING COUNTRIES OVER THE LAST TWO DECADES.

THIS, HE SAID, HAD RESULTED IN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF NEW COLLEGES AND NEW DEPARTMENTS OF PRIMARY CARE OR FAMILY MEDICINE.

THE FOUR-DAY CONFERENCE WILL ALSO HOUSE THE REGIONAL CONFERENCE OF THE WORLD ORGANISATION OF NATIONAL COLLEGES AND ACADEMICS OF GENERAL PRACTICES AND FAMILY MEDICINE. (WONCA).

THE LEADER OF THE PHILIPPINES DELEGATION, DR. ROMEO C. MONTES, SUGGESTED THE FORMATION OF AN ASEAN COLLEGE OF GENERAL PRACTITIONERS AND FAMILY PHYSICIANS.-- BERNAMA MORE 1315/YF

MAHATHIR -4- KUALA LUMPUR-

THE SPOKESMAN FOR THE CONVENTION'S ORGANISING COMMITTEE, DR. TAN TIONG HONG, TOLD REPORTERS LATER, THAT MALAYSIA WOULD SUGGEST INVITING A BIGGER REGIONAL PARTICIPATION IN FUTURE CONVENTIONS BASED ON THE FACT THAT DISEASES ARE EASILY TRANSMITTED AND DO NOT RECOGNISE REGIONAL BARRIERS.

HE SAID THAT A WIDER PARTICIPATION WOULD ENABLE EASIER EXCHANGE OF SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE, AND INFORMATION ON NEW TECHNIQUES OF TREATMENT.

MORE THAN 200 DELEGATES FROM NEW ZEALAND, PHILLIPINES, HONG KONG, MALAYSIA, AUSTRALIA AND SINGAPORE ARE TAKING PART WITH OBSERVORS FROM CANADA, INDIA, UNITED KINGDOM, THAILAND, SRI LANKA AND PAKISTAN.

THE LARGEST DELEGATION IS FROM AUSTRALIA WHICH IS REPRESENTED BY 98 DOCTORS AND FAMILY PHYSICIANS.

IMPORTANT TOPICS TO BE DISCUSSED AT THE CONVENTION INCLUDE PRIMARY CARE OF THE COMMUNITY, CLINICAL PROBLEMS IN GENERAL PRACTICE AND HEALTH EDUCATION IN THE COMMUNITY.

DELEGATES WILL ALSO VISIT THE UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL AND THE NATIONAL LEPROSY CENTRE. -- BERNAMA 1319/YF