

19 OCT 1997

Fellowship

SITI HASMAH RECEIVES FAMILY PHYSICIANS ACADEMY HONORARY FELLOWSHIP

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 19 (Bernama) -- Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali was tonight conferred an honorary fellowship by the Academy of Family Physicians of Malaysia in conjunction with its annual general meeting and convocation.

The fellowship was in recognition of her contributions to the medical field in Malaysia, according to a statement issued by the academy here.

Siti Hasmah, who studied at the University of Malaya in Singapore, obtained her MBBS in 1957.

She joined the government service as a doctor in the outpatient, maternity and medical wards and later was the acting medical superintendent of the Alor Star General Hospital, the first Malay woman to hold such a position.

She was also head of the Maternal and Child Health Division of the Ministry of Health until 1979 when her contract expired.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, in his message in the souvenir programme for the occasion, said that the training and practising of high medical standards of family doctors were expected by the government and Malaysians.

"It was therefore important that family doctor's uphold quality and efficiency in the delivery of health care," he said.

Siti Hasmah, in her speech, said Malaysia's health services were developed from the one which were inherited from a colonial past where local people were not too keen on the so-called western medicine.

Today, the picture had changed and everyone was conscious of the need to seek modern medical treatment but unfortunately still expects the government to provide free treatment as before, she said.

She said it was not possible because the cost of non-contributory health care was just too prohibitive.

No government could really provide total health care even if there was contribution by the citizens, she said.

She said that there must be some cost-sharing either through health insurance or some kind of institutionalised contribution.

Among those present were the Raja of Perlis and the Raja Perempuan of Perlis. -- BERNAMA

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