

# Doctors' on-call allowance extended to six health clinics

**KUALA LUMPUR:** The government has agreed that on-call allowance will be extended to medical officers at six health clinics in a pilot project to tackle the issue of overcrowding in hospitals.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said it is also agreed that the payment of the allowance be extended to include weekends.

"I have also asked the Public Service Department and the Health Ministry to look into this facility so that the on-call allowance could be

extended to all, other than medical officers," he said in the Dewan Rakyat yesterday.

Anwar was replying to a supplementary question by Datuk Seri Wilfred Madius Tangau (PH-Tuaran), who wanted to know whether the government is planning to raise the on-call allowance for doctors in the country.

The prime minister said although the current rate of on-call allowance is appropriate, it needs to

be raised as doctors working in health clinics or hospital emergency departments are not entitled to it.

On the long-standing proposal to absorb contract doctors to permanent positions in the public service, Anwar said the government expected 12,800 out of the 20,330 existing contract doctors to be absorbed within the next three years.

"This year, we expect 4,300 contract doctors to be absorbed.

"We cannot afford to completely

solve this issue this year, but what we can do is provide an additional allocation of RM1.7 billion from the RM3 billion in Budget 2023 as emolument expenditure for the Health Ministry.

"This RM1.7 billion includes the expenditure to absorb and appoint some of the contract doctors to permanent positions."

He also expressed his appreciation to all the contract doctors for not going ahead with the planned strike. - Bernama