

**Parliament: More Pharmacists Choose Government Sector**  
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KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 16 (Bernama) -- As much as 60 percent of the country's pharmacists choose to work in the government sector, citing attractive benefits as their reason to do so, the Dewan Rakyat was informed Wednesday.

Answering a supplementary question from Dr Hiew King Chiew (DAP-Kota Kinabalu) who queried on the shortage of pharmacists in Sabah, Deputy Health Minister Datuk Rosnah Abdul Rashid Shirlin explained that factors such as better career path, critical allowances and chances for promotion had a big impact for this group.

"But we also want to balance the ratio between private and government by encouraging more pharmacists to choose the private sector because we want to achieve the 1:1,000 pharmacist to people ratio of developed countries, set by the World Health Organisation," she said.

Hiew also wanted to know what was being done about the shortage of 2,000 doctors in Sabah and when the Queen Elizabeth Hospital would be completed.

"As of June, 1,312 doctors have been posted to Sabah, compared to 1,102 last year," Rosnah responded.

"The ministry has also hired foreign doctors as well as local retired ones on contract to meet the shortage," she added.

She informed that the 367 bed Queen Elizabeth Hospital would be completed this December and emphasised that medical graduates have increased to more than 3,000 a year and was confident the number would help deal with the shortage.

On a related topic, Datuk Siringan Gubat (BN-Ranau) wanted to know the number of new hospitals and clinics planned for Sabah under the 10-th Malaysia Plan, to which Rosnah answered, "In the '1st Rolling Plan' the ministry will construct one new hospital and upgrade 17 and has plans for 13 new rural clinics."

"The '2nd Rolling Plan' includes eight health and three rural clinics and seven pharmacy projects in Sabah," she said.

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