

**Number Of Health Science Students To Be Increased To 150,000 By 2020, Says  
DPM  
Bernama  
July 20, 2012**

KUALA LUMPUR, July 20 (Bernama) -- The number of health science students at the local institutions of higher learning will be increased to 150,000 by 2020 from the current 55,000 students.

Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin said this followed the rising demand for health science professionals, especially in the Southeast Asia region.

He said the region was currently experiencing a shortage of 1.2 million health science professionals and the number was expected to increase to 1.8 million by 2020.

"Hence, more job opportunities will be made available for health science graduates in the future," he said when opening the Pusrawi International College of Medical Sciences (Picoms), here today.

Muhyiddin, who is also Education Minister, said he believed that Malaysia was capable of playing the main role in meeting the demand for human science professionals in the region.

Present were Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Jamil Khir Baharom, Federal Territory Islamic Religious Department director Datuk Che Mat Che Ali and Picoms chief executive officer Ahmad Zakuan Khairuddin.

Muhyiddin said right now seven public and 62 private institutions of higher learning were offering courses in health science.

He said the health science field was expected to advance further in line with its position as one of the main cluster fields under the National Key Economic Areas (NKEA).

"The government has invested RM1.4 billion in the field with a gross revenue of RM2.8 billion," he said.

Muhyiddin said the responsibility to provide quality education should not be shouldered by the government alone, but also by the private sector because quality education was the prerequisite for the country to become a fully developed nation.

The deputy prime minister said only by getting quality education can quality human capital be produced to bring the country's development to a greater height and competing with other countries.

In another development, Muhyiddin said the initial report on the review of the national education system would be completed by next month and the content would be announced to get public feedback before the final blueprint was prepared by the Education Ministry.

"The ministry has completed a series of national education dialogues across the country to get the people's opinions and views about the things that should be done by the government to improve the quality of national education," he said.

Meanwhile, Muhyiddin also gave his full support for the request made by Picoms to have the college upgraded to a university college by next year.

"Picoms has already established a strategic network with several parties abroad, such as with the University of East London, University of Al-Azhar and Mansourah. This shows that Picoms has gone beyond the country's borders in establishing smart partnership," he added.

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