

Doctor hires offer relief

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But medical fraternity urges tackling allowances for lasting impact

PETALING JAYA: While the announcement to hire over 4,000 new doctors is a much-needed relief for public healthcare, the medical fraternity says issues such as allowances and permanent positions must be addressed too.

Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) president Datuk Dr Kalwinder Singh Khaira, who welcomed the Prime Minister's announcement on the new posts, said this was a positive and much-needed step forward in strengthening the public healthcare system and on long-standing issues related to contract doctors.

"It is our hope that these will become permanent positions for contract doctors and that permanent positions be given based on years of service.

"It is also our hope that in addition to using all existing vacant permanent posts, more permanent positions will be created soon so that all remaining contract doctors in the system can be made permanent.

"Once an adequate number of permanent posts are made available, the government should move to abolish the contract employment scheme for doctors. They should reinstate the policy of offering permanent positions to all doctors entering the public healthcare system as practiced in the past," he added.



Positive strides: Over 4,000 new doctors are being hired, bringing much-needed relief to public healthcare. — AZHAR MAHFOF/The Star

Dr Kalwinder said this would be crucial to help restore confidence and motivate doctors to join the public sector and remain in it with greater job security and a clearer pathway for career progression.

Hartal Doktor Kontrak spokesperson Dr Muhammad Yassin said many contract healthcare workers in the health ministry stood to benefit from the latest development.

"We are still hoping for more good news for healthcare in the coming Budget 2026, especially on on-call allowances and other incentives to stop the brain drain in the Health Ministry," he said, adding that many contract doctors planning to leave the service might reconsider with permanent posts now being offered.

In a Facebook post, Hartal Doktor Kontrak also said several contract doctors received emails notifying them of permanent placement following the Prime Minister's announcement yesterday morning.

"Hopefully, other contract healthcare workers under the Health Ministry would also get a permanent offer in the near future," it added.

MMA Sabah branch past chairman Dr Brandon Patrick called for more doctors to be posted in Sabah and Sarawak, adding that incentives should be given to those posted to both states.

He expressed his support for the Sabah government's proposal to provide an additional special allowance to doctors stationed in Sabah and Sarawak.

Another doctor in a Sabah hospital said: "For those asked to work in Sabah, Sarawak and Labuan, the regional allowance problem has not even been settled."

He said a recent announcement to lower the regional allowance for newcomers and the unfulfilled pledge to increase the on-call allowance to between RM55 and RM65 were a deterrence.