

State to benefit from emphasis on healthcare service

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KUCHING: Assistant Minister of Public Health Dr Jerip Susil hoped that Sarawak will benefit from the commitment towards healthcare services as unveiled in the BN election manifesto as the state still lack medical services and facilities.

He told **thesundaypost** that the state needed more doctors, nurses, clinics, medical facilities and instruments.

“Some projects which were approved under the Ninth Malaysian Plan have yet to be implemented, so we hope that the manifesto will bring to fruition the implementation of some of those long-standing projects.”

Dr Jerip noted that part of the challenge for the state was not only building new facilities, but also upgrading existing ones, including the medical instruments and machines operating in these facilities.

He also expressed his hope that priority would be given to increasing and normalising the number of doctors serving in the state.

“Although we have a lot of housemen, about 30 per cent are from the peninsula and would request to be transferred back after they finish their housemanship. So,

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— Dr Jerip Susil, Assistant Minister of Public Health

there has been a long, chronic shortage of doctors both in urban areas and some rural areas because of this situation.

“In this aspect, we hope that the federal government will consider training more local doctors, increasing the number of student intake for medical students in Unimas, and also increase the number of Sarawakians taking medicine in local universities such as Universiti Malaya, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia and Universiti Sains Malaysia.”

Dr Jerip also suggested that Sarawakian doctors serving in other parts of the country be allowed to come back to serve in the state.

“Many of them want to come back to their home state but they can’t as they are posted elsewhere. So I hope that the federal government will give them priority to come back so they can help ease the shortage of doctors in Sarawak.”

The BN had pledged in the manifesto to develop a national system that will provide every Malaysian access to

quality healthcare, including plans to introduce a support system for palliative homecare for the aged and terminally ill.

They also promised to provide public facilities for dialysis treatment in every high-density area as well as a heart and cancer centre in major hospitals in every zone nationwide.

The manifesto stated that BN was committed to adding 70 more 1Malaysia clinics to the existing 175 as at end of 2012, as well as upgrading 350 government clinics throughout the country.

The manifesto noted that the government already subsidises 90 per cent of all healthcare services to ensure access to quality treatment at the cheapest rate. They had also allocated funds for 150 dialysis machines in government haemodialysis centres.

According to the manifesto, from 2010 to 2013, BN had allocated RM66.1 billion towards healthcare services in the country.