

# Be ready for rural postings, doctors told

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**By Conny Banji**

**SIBU:** Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (Unimas) student doctors have been urged to be ready for rural postings in East Malaysia upon their graduation.

Making the call at Rumah Anggat in Kampung Sebangkoi in Sarikei on Saturday, Deputy Foreign Minister Datuk Joseph Salang Gandum said these were the places where their services were most needed.

He was launching a health intervention programme under the theme 'No Worms Children Are Healthy' organised by 17 fourth-year medical students of Unimas led by four lecturers at the longhouse.

He said many rural areas were still without proper clinics that have

resident doctors.

"I can speak for my Julau constituency, for instance. Despite being on the periphery of an urban, there is still no clinic in both Julau and Pakan districts which have about 50,000 people," he said.

"So whenever the people are sick or injured, they have to be taken to Sarikei, Kanowit or Sibu hospital which are quite a distance away. Such a situation does not exist in Peninsular Malaysia."

Salang said the government was taking steps to address the problem by increasing the number of medical students at local and overseas universities.

"When we have reached the desired number of doctors, we may be able to open up more clinics or upgrade the facilities that we have including having resident doctors.

And it will help if the doctors are prepared to accept rural postings," he said.

On the programme, he said it was a very beneficial one for rural folk.

"I hope they have gathered ample knowledge on how to deal with intestinal worm infestation in their children. I also hope Unimas can have similar programmes in longhouses that have no treated water supply like those in the interior. I believe it is here that there is greater need for such knowledge."

Present at the gathering were Divisional Medical Officer Dr Mohd Asri Rifin, Deputy Deacon of Unimas Medical Faculty Professor Dr Shafiq Abdullah, Head of Community Medicine and Public Health Dr Kamaluddin Bakar and a community leader Pemanca Edward Ladin.