

Set up School of Pharmacy: Musa

DE 07.11.2006 P. 3

By Chris Maskilone

KOTA KINABALU: Chief Minister Datuk Seri Musa Aman proposed that a School of Pharmacy be set up at Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) as one of the ways to meet the World Health Organisation (WHO) standard of one pharmacist to 3,000 population in Sabah.

He said despite the fact that the presence of community pharmacists in the State has greatly improved compared to the 1970s and nearly 500 pharmacists enter the government sector on a yearly basis, the pharmacist-population ratio was still below the standard set by the WHO.

Speaking at the 29th Installation Dinner of the Sabah Pharmaceutical Society at the Le Meridien Hotel here Sunday, he said the suggestion for UMS to establish the School of Pharmacy was also to complement the school of medicine at the institution.

"With the number of pharmacists with post-graduate qualifications in Sabah, they can assist in this matter," he said in his speech delivered

by Resources Development and IT Minister Datuk Dr Yee Moh Chai.

He added that the State Government on its part has been providing scholarships for Malaysians in Sabah to pursue Bachelor of Pharmacy courses both in the local as well as overseas universities.

"It is my hope that these pharmacists would return to Sabah to serve," he said.

According to him, by increasing the number of pharmacists they can play a better role especially in healthcare since they could spend more time with the patient to ensure medicines are properly administered and counselled to get the maximum benefit.

In this aspect, he said pharmacists should continually upgrade themselves with continuing education in view of the very dynamic changes happening in the world of medicines.

The Chief Minister also urged pharmacists through the pharmaceutical society, which began with just six members in 1976 and now has about 120, to continue involvement in the fight against drug abuse.

"It has become one of the greater ills of society in our country," he said.

In another note, Musa urged the private sector to consider setting up a facility to manufacture medicines in Sabah.

The market for the products need not be just Sabah or Malaysia but the Philippines, Indonesia and Brunei.

"Sabah, with the availability of well educated pharmacists as well as cost-effective labour force, can also become a place for the setting up of pharmaceutical factories," he said, adding that UMS can also provide academic input and source of products for commercialisation through its own research on biomedicine.

Towards this end, Musa reminded pharmacists to work hand-in-hand with doctors since the general public health cannot be just seen from the business point of view.

"As experts in medicine, the pharmacists must play their role effectively," he said.