



16 AUG, 2026

MoH to absorb graduates to address nurse shortage

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KOTA KINABALU: The Health Ministry (MoH) will directly absorb all Institut Latihan Kementerian Kesihatan Malaysia (ILKKM) Diploma in Nursing graduates who pass their course and register with the Malaysian Nursing Board into permanent positions, said Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad.

The Health Minister said the move was part of three key strategies to address the country's critical nursing shortage, which currently stands at 10,557 vacancies.

"As of June 30, I must acknowledge that we are facing a very critical manpower shortage," he said at the 2026 ILKKM Convocation Ceremony for the Sabah Zone at Universiti Malaysia Sabah here yesterday.

Of the 73,281 Grade U5 nursing posts nationwide, only 62,724, or about 85.6 per cent, have been filled.

Dzulkefly said the shortage was driven by retirements, the migration of skilled personnel overseas and competition from the private sector.

Under the ministry's workforce reform, the intake of trainee nurses has been increased to 3,000 annually from 2025,

with 13,345 ILKKM graduates expected by 2030.

The ministry also plans to outsource up to 2,000 trainee places annually to public and private higher education institutions and reopen four ILKKM branches in Kuantan, Kuala Terengganu, Muar and Penang by October 2027.

The move will add about 500 trainee places annually, bringing the total capacity of the Diploma in Nursing programme to 5,500 trainees a year.

For career development, 15 On-the-Job Training programmes will begin next month, while Community Nurses will be given a pathway

to qualify as nurses through a transitional diploma.

Dzulkefly said the Health Ministry had also been given autonomy since July 9 to manage staffing, reducing bureaucracy and enabling graduates to be placed directly at healthcare facilities.

Meanwhile, he said Sabah recorded 9,442 registered trained nurses, while applications to ILKKM from Sabah increased by 18.8 per cent compared with last year.

A total of 6,987 ILKKM graduates were celebrated nationwide this year, including 924 in Sabah, 5,117 in the Peninsula and 946 in Sarawak.



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SUMMARIES

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