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Three key strategies to address critical nurse shortage: MOH

Daily Express (KK), Malaysia



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KOTA KINABALU: The Ministry of Health (MOH) is strengthening three key strategies under the country’s health workforce reform to address the critical shortage of nurses, said Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad.

He said the three strategies involved increasing the number of nursing graduates, expanding career pathways and implementing direct recruitment and greater autonomy in staffing management.

“Of the 73,281 Grade U5 nurse positions, there are currently 10,557 vacancies in health facilities,” he said in his speech at the 2026 Ministry of Health Training Institute (ILKKM) Sabah Zone Convocation at the Chancellor’s Hall, Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS), Saturday.

Dzulkefly said the move was important in meeting the country’s health workforce needs amid the increasingly complex challenges facing the health system.

Under the strategy to increase the nursing workforce, he said the intake of nurse trainees had been increased to 3,000 a year from 2025.

“To expand this strategy, the MOH aims to outsource up to 2,000 trainees a year to Public Higher Education Institutions (IPTA) and Private Higher Education Institutions (IPTS),” he said.

In addition, he said four ILKKM branches in

Kuantan, Kuala Terengganu, Muar and Penang would reopen by October 2027, providing additional capacity for about 500 trainees.

“This brings the total capacity of the Diploma in Nursing programme to 5,500 trainees a year,” he added.

For the second strategy, Dzulkefly said the MOH would roll out 15 On-the-Job Training (OJT) programmes this September to enable staff to enhance their expertise without having to leave their workplace for long periods.

“The Ministry is also expanding the career pathway for community nurses to become nurses through the Transition Diploma,” he said.

Under the third strategy, Dzulkefly said the Public Service Department (JPA) had approved an exemption from Interim Contract Appointments for eligible ILKKM Diploma in Nursing graduates.

“This means that all ILKKM Diploma in Nursing graduates who have successfully completed the programme and are registered with the Nursing Board of Malaysia will be absorbed directly to permanent positions,” he said.

Dzulkefly said since July 9, 2026, the Ministry had also been granted autonomy in staffing management to reduce bureaucracy and facilitate the direct placement of graduates in the field.



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SUMMARIES

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