

# Sabah Health Dept targets 1:400 doctor-patient ratio

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By Mariah Dokail

**KOTA KINABALU:** The Sabah Health Department is pushing for a 1:400 doctor-patient ratio to improve healthcare in the state.

Its director, Dr. Christina Rundi said the current ratio is 1:1,500, and admitted that the target of 1:400 is still far from achievement.

"Sabah with a population of over 3.5 million is the second largest state in Malaysia. It is obvious that we need more doctors to reach the target.

"We are calling for more medical officers to take the opportunity in becoming specialists as we are also facing a shortage of specialists in Sabah," she said this to reporters in a press conference after launching the 1st Borneo Paediatrics and

Paediatric Surgery Conference at Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) School of Medicine, yesterday.

Rundi, in her speech earlier, also expressed her appreciation to the university for its contribution towards improving the doctor-patient ratio.

"In the past 20 years, UMS has genuinely advanced the causes of Sabahan healthcare and medical research. The opening of its Medical School has seen many batches of graduates, and some of whom are already specialists with the Ministry of Health.

"We at the Sabah State Health Department would like to thank the UMS School of Medicine for all its contributions towards improving the ratio," she said, adding that UMS School of Medicine has produced

almost 400 graduates since the medical school's inception in 2003.

During the two days' conference which ended yesterday, a total of 498 local and international participants had benefited from the working papers presented by experienced doctors.

Rundi said the department hoped the conference would be the beginning of many more collaborations, both with paediatric surgeons and paediatricians from other countries, and with many institutes of higher learning to further improve knowledge of the medical team in Sabah in treating and managing their patients.

Also present at the event yesterday were Sabah Women and Children's Hospital, hospital director Dr Tan Bee Hwai and UMS dean of School



Rundi launching the 1st Borneo Paediatrics and Paediatric Surgery Conference at UMS.

of Medicine Dr D Kamarudin D Mudin.

Kamarudin, in his welcoming speech, said the conference marked another step in the school's medical education, continuing professional development in collaboration with specialist clinicians from two different countries, Australia and New Zealand.

"It is a great encouragement to see so many health professionals from around the country, representing diverse backgrounds and experiences, gather here at UMS to share as well as pursue knowledge.

"We hope all the participants will be able to forge lasting and productive friendships and working relationships through this event, and we also hope that it will spark off inter-state and inter-institutional collaborations for many years to come," he said.

On the first day, seven presentations were shared with the participants, namely Congenital Heart Disease: Facts We Should Know by UMS paediatric cardiologist Associate Prof Dr Asmiati Hamid, Neonata; Cardiac Emergencies by Queen Elizabeth II paediatric cardiologist Dr Siva Rao, An Overview of Cardiac Surgery in Congenital Heart Disease by Queen Elizabeth Hospital II consultant cardiothoracic surgeon Dr Abu Bakar Mamat, Approach To A Collapsed Child by Sabah Women and Children Hospital consultant paediatrician Dr Matthew Chong, Acute Encephalopathy in Children by Sabah Women and Children's Hospital paediatric neurologist Dr Heng Hock Sin, Paediatric Rehabilitation by UMS rehabilitation physician Associate Prof Dr Khin Nyein Yin and Child Protection Issues by Sabah Women and

Children's Hospital consultant in community paediatrics Dr Fauziah Zainal Abidin.

Meanwhile, another seven papers were presented on the final day yesterday by Associate Prof Dr Deborah Bailey from Australia (Transportation of Ill Children and Management of Burns in Children), Dr Phillip Morreau from New Zealand (Recent Advances and Management of Congenital Diaphragmatic Hernia & Congenital Lung Lesion and Recent Advances and Management of Necrotizing Enterocolitis), Dr Abdul Latiff from Wagga Wagga Australia (Paediatric Airway Emergencies), Janice Hui Ling from Brunei (Diagnosis and Management of Neonatal Obstruction) and Celine Hamid from Wagga Wagga Australia (Diagnosis and Management of Abdominal Pain in Children).