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Quality healthcare for the people

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Forward

BRINGING the government to her people is the purpose of this supplement. We discuss the many and varied ways that the Rakyat is supported and assisted so as to promote stability, prosperity and

unity in the country. From welfare to health, Malaysians are protected and cared for through the many programmes and technological advancements. (p2-3 and p15)

The very heart of the nation lies in its focus on quality education for every citizen delivering a Malaysian society that is intelligent, world-aware and capable. The Rakyat

is the jewel in Malaysia's crown and is pivotal to the country's foray into developed status. The Malaysian education system is discussed in Page 14.

Business opportunities (p7, 10-11) abound in the country and the government nurtures and encourages the growth of new ideas in agriculture, manufacturing and

the services industry. Numerous agencies have been set up to cater to the needs of Malaysians as they expand both locally and internationally in making Malaysia the choice partner for trade and bilateral relations.

In this issue of *Your Government*, we are proudly joined by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the

Forest Research Institute of Malaysia, the Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation (MATRADE) and the Department of Occupational Safety and Health (DOSH) that talk about the work they are united in doing for the mutual benefit of all Malaysians and the development of the country.

Quality healthcare for the people

Malaysia offers one of the best healthcare services in the region that has seen tremendous improvement in the last 30 years in terms of the number of hospitals, clinics, medical staff and quality of service.

Improving the quality and delivery of healthcare services has been the key focus with highly subsidised health services in the country ensuring everyone benefits. Free healthcare is also provided to the poor, pensioners and the elderly.

A wide range of health and medical initiatives are undertaken to improve the health of Malaysians. Over the years, maternal and child health have experienced impressive improvements with infant mortality rates declining from 41 per 1,000 live births in 1970 to 16 in 1990 to 10 in 2006.

As for maternal mortality it is estimated to be 33 per 100,000 live births as compared to 141 per 100,000 in 1970. Another indicator of a successful healthcare system is the improved life expectancy at birth, which now stands at above 72 years. Children today are protected from various infectious diseases through vaccination such as mumps, measles, rubella and influenza.

The Ministry of Health, the key provider of healthcare in the country was allocated RM10.2 billion under the Ninth Malaysia Plan (2006-2010). Of the allocated

sum, RM3.3 billion was for public healthcare, RM5.4 billion for patient care services, which includes building new hospitals and renovation, and RM1.3 billion for other healthcare services, including the training of staff.

Working together with government agencies and private entities, the ministry has ensured that everyone in the country has access to some form of health facility.

Among the agencies MOH works with are the Ministry of Higher Education which manages university hospitals, the Ministry of Defence, which runs army hospitals and the Ministry of Human Resources, which handles social security.

Malaysia has an extensive network of public hospitals and clinics that span the entire country. Currently, there are 136 public hospitals, 2,965 government clinics, 151 mobile clinics as well as 131 district health offices throughout the country.

MOH offers a broad range of services through rural health clinics (Klinik Desa), maternity and child health clinics, community polyclinics (poliklinik komuniti) and general hospitals.

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Rural health clinics are equipped to provide primary healthcare services ranging from outpatient care, family health, dental, nutrition and dietetics, home nursing to health education and promotion.

According to the International Health Organisation, Malaysia has one of the best rural health services in the world. There is a clinic every five kilometres in the country and more than 95 per cent of the rural population in Peninsular Malaysia has access to health facilities and about 70 per cent in Sabah and Sarawak.

Polyclinics provide more comprehensive primary healthcare services than rural clinics. As for public hospitals, there are three specific types —

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general hospitals, district hospitals and speciality medical institutions - which are designed to provide a range of secondary healthcare services to the people. Every state in the country has a general hospital that is equipped to provide a full range of healthcare services.

The district hospitals offer basic diagnostic and curative services and the speciality medical institution focuses on treating specific diseases, such as leprosy and tuberculosis.

The doctor-patient ratio in Malaysia is at 1:1,200 and the government is working to improve the ratio to 1:600 by 2013.

ACCORDING TO THE INTERNATIONAL HEALTH ORGANISATION, MALAYSIA HAS ONE OF THE BEST RURAL HEALTH SERVICES IN THE WORLD.

