

AKHBAR : THE SUN

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RUANGAN : NEWS WITHOUT BORDERS

Housemen can be recalled during off days: Health minister

KUALA LUMPUR: Hospitals are allowed to recall housemen during their off days and replace them at the end of their training, when necessary.

This is despite worries that the trainee doctors may not have enough rest.

"It depends on the reality and current demand of their respective departments," Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad told the Dewan Rakyat here yesterday.

"Their heads will use their discretion in

making decisions (pertaining to off days). At the end of the day, patient's care is most important.

"Yes, we do set the off days, but in the end, you must have a system that is workable and actionable."

He was answering a question from Mohd Shafar Abdullah (BN-Paya Besar) on whether the ministry will make the one off day a week entitlement for housemen mandatory, and not replace them in a lump sum at the end of their service in that department.

Under current practice, housemen are rotated to a different department every four months and are required to work 16-hour days with only one off day a week.

Mohd Shafar also expressed concern over claims that some housemen had their annual leave days deducted for taking medical leave.

He said this is an unfair practise.

Dzulkefly said the respective heads of department also has discretionary power on the matter.