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System glitches disrupt future plans

Doctors in state of limbo over their next step after intake placements deferred

By TRACY GUNAPALAN
newsdesk@thestar.com.my

PETALING JAYA: Following glitches in the ePlacement system, several medical officers say they are facing difficulty in planning their future.

According to the doctors (not their real names), aside from the technical inconveniences, they are now in a state of limbo over their next step.

Dr Mo, who works in Kuala Lumpur, said he received an e-mail informing him of the deferment at 2am on Sunday, only a day before the intake placements

were supposed to be made available.

"My colleagues and I were upset because some of us had booked places to stay so we would have access to the Internet to get into the system. Now it's postponed again," he said on Monday.

He said the last-minute change was particularly frustrating for those who took time off work to secure their spots.

"It's hard enough to apply for leave in the government sector, especially with a lack of manpower, and now the time we took off is wasted.

"We're left hanging because we

don't know what the next step is. Some of us have families and it's hard to make decisions given the circumstances. They cannot simply change (the system) like this and expect us to accommodate the mistake," he added.

Dr Dheena, who works at a hospital in Selangor, is hopeful that the government's new approach outlined in a memorandum will be fairer.

"I am willing to be patient because the director-general said this new system will be based on merit. It shouldn't be on a first-come, first-served basis anyway," she said.

She also hopes that the ministry will be more considerate when it comes to junior doctors.

"It is frustrating. We go through medical school for five years, so we can't miss any opportunity for a permanent job," she added.

Dr Aaron, who works in Penang, is upset by the last-minute changes.

He said the news is just the latest in a string of uncertainties that are adding stress on medical officers.

"As it is, we are going through a contract system, which means our future is uncertain. Now we have this system that is not even

functioning well," he lamented.

Frustrations initially surfaced after the Health Ministry's announcement on March 7 that the placement selection for 2,245 Grade UD10 medical officers, submitted on Feb 27, were cancelled due to technical disruptions in the ePlacement system.

On Monday, Health director-general Datuk Dr Muhammad Radzi Abu Hassan said the existing ePlacement selection system, which uses the first-come, first-served approach, will be replaced with a more transparent, fairer and merit-based system that meets both demand and supply.