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All smiles: Liow mingling with nurses during the celebration in Shah Alam yesterday.

Cash perks for specialist nurses

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SHAH ALAM: More specialist nurses will enjoy monthly cash incentives as part of the Government's bid to encourage them to specialise.

Health Minister Datuk Seri Liow Tiong Lai said there was a shortage of specialist or special care nurses, with only 21,814 nurses having post-basic qualifications from a total of 96,598.

To encourage them to specialise, he said the Government had expanded the list of critical care and clinical specialisation to 26 fields from the initial 18.

Liow said a post-basic certificate

was equivalent to an advanced diploma, and the added skills and knowledge would help nurses care for their patients better.

"Since October 2007, the Government has approved post-basic incentive payments of RM100 per month to all nurses attached to the Health Ministry who hold post-basic certificates in one of the 18 fields of critical care and clinical specialisation.

"We are now expanding it with eight more fields, and this took effect on April 1," he said at the International Nurses Day celebration here yesterday.

The eight additional fields are:

- > Infection-control treatment;

- > HIV/AIDS counselling;
- > Diabetes management;
- > Gastrointestinal endoscopy;
- > Primary healthcare;
- > Rehabilitation;
- > Forensics; and
- > Sports medicine.

The initial 18 fields included intensive care unit, midwifery, public health and cardiac care.

"If you don't have the certificate, please take the course. Upgrade yourself. It is a six-month to one year course," said Liow.

On a related matter, he said the Health Ministry had applied to the Public Service Department to hire 9,000 more nurses due to a shortage.