

Few claims recipients want to resume work

BY CECIL FUNG

KUALA LUMPUR: There have been only a few takers since the Social Security Organisation started its "Return to Work" rehabilitation programme in February, and Socso feels it is fighting an uphill battle to get workers to accept it.

Socso medical and rehabilitation manager Dr Mohammed Azman Aziz Mohammed said many prefer to make disablement or invalidity claims and live with their condition rather than go for rehabilitation.

"We need to motivate them so that they don't just look at the mon-

etary benefits that they get from their impairment.

"We want them to look at the whole picture, because if they are able to continue working they stand to gain more than just the 50% to 65% claims they get from Socso," he said.

The rehabilitation programme is currently in "pilot project" stage focusing on permanently disabled workers who suffer from back and cervical pains.

Socso is partnering DBC Back to Health (M) Sdn Bhd to provide the workers' rehabilitation, which is fully borne by Socso. The company carries out the rehabilitation at its

centres in Plaza Ampang here and at Jalan Datuk Lau Pak Khuan in Ipoh.

It is estimated that of the more than 9,000 permanently disabled workers, some 30% have back and cervical injuries.

The aim of the rehabilitation programme is to get workers to resume their work, through motivation and counselling, and employers are encouraged to give the injured workers a chance to work again or, if this was not possible, to reassign them to another position.

Dr Mohammed Azman said studies carried out in Australia showed

that the chances of someone returning to work after six months of medical leave was 50%.

If the medical leave was for more than 12 months, the chances of them coming back was only 20%.

"That's why we want to intervene immediately when they suffer an injury," he said.

Dr Mohammed Azman said the programme would eventually be expanded to cover a broader range of injuries.

"We are now in the final stages of including counselling and psychological rehabilitation for the current programme," he said.



Dr Mohammed Azman: 'If they are able to continue working they stand to gain more'