



29 JAN, 2021

## MMA: Private GPs can boost Health Ministry vaccination plan

New Straits Times, Malaysia



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**KUALA LUMPUR:** The Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) has urged the government to use private general practitioners to reach more people in its Covid-19 vaccination programme.

Its president, Professor Datuk Dr Subramaniam Muniandy, said the move would speed up the programme.

"Increasing private GP clinic participation in this national vaccination programme will help the government reduce traffic at government vaccination sites.

"This will also cut down dependency on government manpower and resources in carrying out the programme as GPs will use their own staff," he said yesterday.

Dr Subramaniam said GPs had experience in coordinating mass programmes as many were involved in the mass Covid-19



Professor Datuk Dr Subramaniam Muniandy

screening of foreign workers.

"These programmes are coordinated by participating clinics."

He said private GPs had a long experience in giving vaccinations, dating back to pre-independence days.

"Health Ministry-trained pri-

vate GPs and their clinics are well distributed and close to the community in urban and rural areas.

"However, regrettably, they have been underused in managing the pandemic."

There are 7,000 Health Ministry-trained private GPs, he added.

He said the government should prioritise locations with dense populations as they carried a higher risk of Covid-19 transmissions.

"Many private GP clinics are in these areas, therefore, access will be quicker and more convenient for the population.

"Also, many patients managed by private GPs have comorbidities, which qualify them to receive vaccines, (which follows) plans in the vaccination programme to prioritise the vacci-

nation of vulnerable groups."

Science, Technology and Innovation Minister Khairy Jamaluddin, in an interview with Code Blue, said the programme would start in March by immunising 75,000 people a day in 600 sites nationwide.

The sites include Health Ministry hospitals, public health clinics, university hospitals, armed forces hospitals and clinics, private GP clinics and private healthcare facilities.

Dr Subramaniam urged the government to ensure that the administering of the vaccines would be carried out by qualified, trained medical personnel with no involvement of non-healthcare middlemen or agents.

He said the highest standards of care must be maintained with healthcare facilities accepting

full medico-legal accountability.

"Going forward, we urge the Science Technology and Innovation Ministry and Health Ministry to work together on the vaccination programme as there are many regulations, protocols and guidelines on patient safety and adverse events following immunisation.

"Hence, only qualified and trained medical personnel can give vaccinations."

He urged the government to ensure transparency in its vaccination programme.

"Never before has the country carried out a national vaccination programme on this scale and never before have vaccines been developed in record time.

"Therefore, we have the hurdle of winning over public confidence in getting vaccinated."



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### SUMMARIES

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