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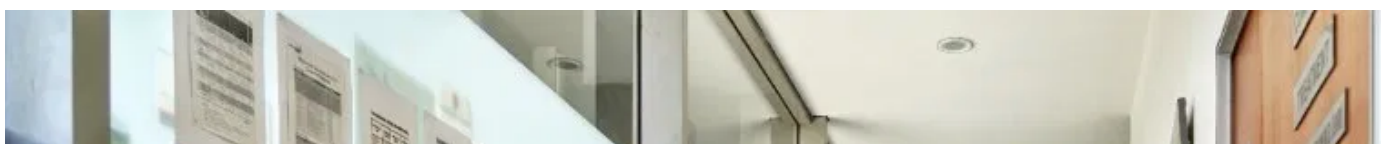
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Private Clinics, Hospitals Offer To Administer Covid-19 Vaccines

By Kanmani Batumalai | 18 February 2021

Putrajaya has yet to discuss if private hospitals and GP clinics will be included in the national Covid-19 vaccination programme that is set to launch on February 26.





Patients wait at a GP clinic in Kuala Lumpur. Picture taken by Saw Siow Feng on February 3, 2020.

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 18 — Medical groups said private hospitals and clinics are ready to provide their services to the national Covid-19 vaccination programme, Malaysia's biggest inoculation campaign in history.

The Association of Private Hospitals of Malaysia (APHM) and the Malaysian Medical Association (MMA), the largest doctors' group in the country, said the government has yet to discuss with them if private hospitals and clinics will be included in the vaccination drive that will be launched in about a week's time on February 26.

MMA secretary-general Dr R. Arasu stated that MMA has not engaged with the Ministry of Health (MOH) or the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation (MOSTI) formally to discuss this matter.

"Basically we did have an engagement with MOH and what we know is, the first phase will be done at the vaccine centres because of the cold chain for Pfizer vaccines," Dr Arasu said in an online panel discussion yesterday titled "Partnering with the government of Malaysia on building a more resilient healthcare sector".

"In fact, our colleagues in Penang, more than 200 over clinics have offered to provide the services for free."

At the same time, MMA also believes that the national Covid-19 vaccination programme can involve more general practitioners (GPs) to participate in this mission as part of their corporate social responsibility.

Dr Arasu also mentioned that more GPs might be involved in the second and third phase of the Covid-19 vaccination programme, as these phases targeting high-risk groups and all adults above the age of 18 will involve a large number of vaccinators. The first vaccination phase is for medical and non-medical frontline workers.

“So probably that is when they are getting the GPs, the network of 8,000 clinics nationwide. Of course, in terms of having serious discussion, not yet. But there are informal discussions that are ongoing,” he said.

“Now that another party (MOSTI) is taking care of the vaccine part, we have to write to both the ministries to get a more clearer picture on this part.”

Besides that, APHM president Dr Kuljit Singh also reassured the government that private hospitals are willing to lend their hand in the country’s Covid-19 vaccination mission.

“We in the private sector are happy to help out the vaccine programmes. But we are still waiting for details from MOH or the other ministry (MOSTI) on the processes of getting these things done. But we are ready, we can roll it out. Not a problem,” Dr Kuljit said.

Malaysia is scheduled to kick off the national Covid-19 vaccination programme on February 26, after delivery of 312,390 Pfizer-BioNTech doses on February 21.

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