

Vaccinate and legalise undocumented migrants in one go, say DAP Youth

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Verbal assurances may not be enough to convince undocumented foreign workers and their employers to participate in vaccination programme. (Bernama pic)

PETALING JAYA: A DAP Youth leader tonight proposed for Putrajaya to roll out the vaccination programme for undocumented foreign workers and the campaign to legalise them simultaneously.

Chiong Yoke Kong said the government should grab the opportunity to simplify the registration procedures of legalising all undocumented foreign workers in the country.

"This will fundamentally solve the problems related to foreign workers in various aspects, including our public health system that is increasingly being strained by the pandemic," the wing's deputy chairman said in a statement.

He said this in response to science, technology and innovation minister Khairy Jamaluddin's assurance that undocumented foreign workers who come out to be vaccinated freely would not get arrested.

But Chiong said, while the wing welcomed the decision, Khairy's verbal assurance may not be able to convince all undocumented foreign workers and their employers from participating in the vaccination programme.

He added that some employers and migrant workers might be worried that the government might "talk the talk but not walk the walk due to uncoordinated government responses", with the Immigration Department and police having jurisdiction on their status as undocumented foreign workers.



DAP Youth deputy chairman Chiong Yoke Kong.

Chiong added that if the government does not establish a complete database for undocumented foreign workers who come forward for vaccination, it will inevitably face various difficulties and challenges in tracking the spread of the virus and the vaccine's effectiveness in the future.

"Therefore, the government should grab the opportunity created by the vaccination programme to launch a legalisation scheme that aims at simplifying various procedures for reregistration and establishing a database for undocumented foreign workers."

He said in the past, the government implemented various legalisation or re-employment schemes many times with the hope of solving the problem.

However, due to various obstacles such as red tape and high costs, such schemes did not achieve the intended outcomes.

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