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Allow private hospitals to buy and offer Covid-19 vaccine — Penang govt

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BUKIT MERTA JAM: The Penang state government is requesting the central government to allow private hospitals in the state to procure Covid-19 vaccine and to dispense it to those who can afford to obtain their jabs faster.

State Health, Agriculture, Agro-based Industry and Rural Development Committee chairman, Dr Norlela Ariffin said the matter was raised with Coordinating Minister of the National Covid-19 Immunisation Programme (Pick), Khairy Jamaluddin in a Vaccine Engagement Meeting yesterday.

“In the meeting yesterday, I told Khairy to allow private hospitals here to acquire vaccine so that those who can afford especially the VIP group would receive their shots faster by paying (to private hospitals).

“They (VIP) can afford to pay and its better we allow private hospitals to procure the vaccine compared to waiting for free jabs according to the stipulated phases.

“The minister (Khairy) appears to agree but maintained that private hospitals should obtain approval from the National Pharmaceutical Regulatory Agency (NPRA) for each vaccine they want to acquire,” she told reporters after receiving her vaccine shot at Seberang Jaya Health Clinic here today.

She said the state government also received applications from non-governmental organisations (NGO) in the state to channel Covid-19 vaccine to certain groups especially senior citizens so that they get vaccinated earlier.

Norlela said as a medical hub state with many who could afford getting the jab at private hospitals here, the state government hoped the request would be approved soon.

“Apart from that, there are no issues of queue jumping in Penang for the vaccine and vaccination is dispensed according to the name list registered in MySejahtera, and we really have no problems on cutting queue,” she said.

She said in the same meeting, the Penang government also announced that the list of more than 200,000 senior citizens in Penang under i-Sejahtera would be entered into MySejahtera to receive vaccine shots.

"So all senior citizens need not register as their names are already in the list. I am also calling for senior citizens especially those who lived in old folks homes to be among the early recipients," she said.

Meanwhile, she said more than 1,000 of the 33,227 frontliners in Penang had received their vaccine jabs since Sunday while others will get them shortly.

She said 22,753 were Health Ministry (MOH) frontline workers while 10,474 frontline personnel were non-MOH staff. — *Bernama*

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