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Queue-jumper risks vaccine rollout



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by ASILA JALIL / pic by TMR FILE

CONCERNED about reports that individuals have been inoculated with Covid-19 vaccine ahead of frontliners, doctors are calling for more comprehensive information about scheduling as a mean to end queue-jumping.

Malaysian Medical Association president Professor Datuk Dr Subramaniam Muniandy said the Special Committee on Covid-19 Vaccine Supply Access Guarantee (JKJAV) must update the public on the priority groups that are receiving the vaccine in stages to ensure no one takes advantage of the system.

“While JKJAV has provided guidelines on who are prioritised for vaccinations, certain politicians receiving the jabs can give the impression that the system can be manipulated to the advantage of certain individuals.

“JKJAV must investigate how it was possible for certain VVIPs to jump the queue for the vaccinations,” he told *The Malaysian Reserve* yesterday.

The special committee must also provide an explanation for these incidents that have taken place as every shot of vaccine is accounted for, he said.

Besides being transparent on its prioritisation for the vaccines both in policy and implementation, he said the committee should also provide a thorough explanation of the system and selection criteria for individuals to be vaccinated.

"The national immunisation programme must be carried out systematically, according to plan and with stricter control over the vaccines as it is costing the country billions of ringgit.

"The special committee should also provide frequent updates on which priority groups are being vaccinated in the various stages. The rakyat must be kept informed throughout," he said.

Frontliners are all worked up over the issue surrounding individuals who jumped the queue to get vaccinated, pushing back the names of frontliners who have been directly managing the spread of Covid-19 in the country.

The issue surfaced when nephrologist Dr Rafidah Abdullah tweeted on Feb 25, that she heard rumours from fellow medical frontliners that there were individuals who tried jumping queues and "used their power" to get vaccinated.

Last Sunday, Dr Rafidah then shared a screenshot of a message by an anonymous individual who told her to highlight an issue where the individual was told that members of the Kelantan state secretary office (SUK) have requested for 200 of its members to get vaccinated first.

Based on the screenshot, the person claimed that doctors, nurses and frontliners who were listed earlier to get the vaccine had to be pushed back to make way for the SUK's members.

The Kelantan State Local Government, Housing and Health Committee has denied the allegations.

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Following up on that, JKJAV co-chair Khairy Jamaluddin Abu Bakar responded via his Twitter account saying that he took the matter seriously and urged whistleblowers to email him anonymously, for the matters to be investigated.

Khairy had previously said that the government would consider issuing compounds on individuals who found jumping queues to get vaccinated.

He said he had received complaints regarding the matter through emails and all the claims would be looked into.

The government also introduced a guideline that classified frontliners into two categories where Category 1 is members who are directly involved with treatment and healthcare, encompassing institutions under the Health Ministry, Defence Ministry, teaching and private hospitals.

Category 2 is for members who are involved in the health sector, defence agencies, security personnel and essential services. This also includes MPs, members of a state legislative assembly and government officials involved in overseas trips of Cabinet ministers, among others.

Meanwhile, Suara Rakyat Malaysia ED Sevan Doraisamy expressed his disagreement with the commercialisation of the Covid-19 vaccine by private hospitals as this would further encourage individuals to cut queue.

He said commercialisation would raise the price of any vaccines available, making vaccines even more inaccessible to the poor or vulnerable.

"Furthermore, allowing private hospitals to procure vaccines and subsequently running their own vaccination programme also contradicts the principles of giving everyone an equal opportunity in the country's largest vaccination programme ever," he said in a statement yesterday.

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