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Govt may review 'voluntary' Covid-19 vaccination policy in July

By [Veena Babulal and Farah Solhi](#) - April 5, 2021 @ 6:04pm

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Malaysia may review its voluntary Covid-19 vaccination policy come July. - Bernama pic

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia may review its voluntary Covid-19 vaccination policy come July.

Science, Technology and Innovation Minister Khairy Jamaluddin said the policy will be reviewed if the uptake for the inoculation is still low in July when the country is poised to get millions of doses of the vaccine from manufacturers.

"We will reassess the level of vaccination registrations in July this year," he said when asked at what point would the administration switch its game plan to a mandatory vaccination policy to achieve the desired herd immunity levels faster.

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Khairy said July was the stretched target because at present, demand outstrips supply and the delivery schedule is set to increase from the month.

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"If we see supply overtake demand, starting in July and August when we will have millions of doses coming in on a monthly basis, then we will consider further options to increase registration.

"For now, I think we are okay with continuing to encourage people to sign up voluntarily but at some point, you are right, I am thinking it will be around July that we revisit the policy," he said during a media briefing following the Covid-19 Immunisation Task Force meeting here today.



Science, Technology and Innovation Minister Khairy Jamaluddin said the policy will be reviewed if the uptake for the inoculation is still low in July when the country is poised to get millions of doses of the vaccine from manufacturers. - Bernama pic

He said that so far, 2,344,621 people of those who registered, or nearly 25 per cent of the 9.4 million target, have qualified under Phase 2 of the national vaccination drive.

On Malaysia's purported slow vaccination rates, Khairy reiterated that the country was on target as the bulk of its vaccines have yet to arrive.

"There is this perception that our vaccination rate is slow but it is based on the delivery schedules given to us by manufacturers.

"Quite a lot of vaccines will start coming in July and we will see a significant increase in the number of doses from Pfizer and other manufactures. As far as we are concerned, we are still on target to finish Phase 1 and start Phase 2 by this month as per the plan."

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It was also revealed that 15.2 per cent of those who registered under the phase are aged 60 and above while 21.5 per cent have comorbidities.

Khairy said the government has received 7,906,913 registrations to date, with 32.6 per cent of those being healthy people above the age of 18.

On March 28, Khairy had said that if the registration for the second phase continues to lag, the government will not wait for at-risk groups such as the elderly, the disabled and those with comorbidities to sign up but would instead slot in those under Phase 3 once vaccine supplies are sufficient.

The third phase involves adults aged 18 and above who do not have any comorbidities. It is scheduled to take place in May.

Khairy had, however, said the decision to bring forward the third phase does not mean that the government had given up on those who had yet to register for the second phase.

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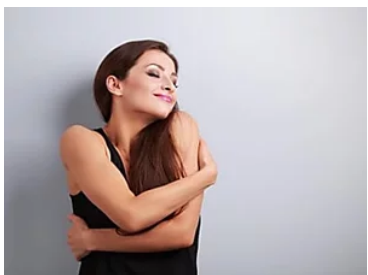
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