

18.5.2021_NST_MOSTI_SLOT FOF AZ VACCINE OPEN FROM MAY 23

SECOND ROUND

SLOTS FOR AZ VACCINE OPEN FROM MAY 23

1 million doses with
priority given to
those over 60 in KL,
Selangor, Penang,
Johor and Sarawak

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THE second round of the opt-in programme for the AstraZeneca Covid-19 vaccine will be open for bookings from May 23 to 26 for senior citizens residing here and in four states.

National Covid-19 Immunisation Programme Coordinating Minister Khairy Jamaluddin said the slots were open to senior citizens aged above 60 in Kuala Lumpur, Selangor, Penang, Johor and Sarawak.

Khairy, in a post on Twitter yesterday, said the federal territory and four states had been seeing high daily new Covid-19 cases.

"Bookings (are available) via (the <http://vaksinacovid.gov.my>) website and community clinic outreach programmes conducted by district health clinics," said Khairy, who is also science, technology and innovation minister.

Earlier, during the weekly press conference by the Covid-19 Immunisation Task Force (CITF), Khairy said the government decided to reopen bookings for the AstraZeneca Covid-19 vaccine due to the success of the first round.

"For the second round, those aged 60 and above will be given early access (to the vaccine) to ensure we can provide protection (against infection) for the high-risk group as the country faces a surge in cases," he said during the press conference that was conducted virtually as Khairy is under a home surveillance order.

He said a quota of slots for the programme would be allocated to district health offices as some elderly people might not be able to register via the website.

He said the decision was in line with the government's effort to control the pandemic and is a

combination of phase two and four of the National Immunisation Programme (NIP).

He said, however, that 25,000 people already on the waiting list were expected to get their jabs.

"If there are still vacancies after May 26, we will open it to the general public under age 60."

On Saturday, Khairy announced that one million doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine, procured via the Covid-19 Vaccines Global Access (Covax) facility, would be open for registration this month.

He confirmed that vaccination of the elderly at old folks homes under phase two of the NIP had begun.

"I am aware that this has been an issue in the past few days and would like to state that vaccination of people at elderly care homes has started. For elderly care homes, vaccination is done in-situ. We go there and vaccinate them at the homes. That has been decided."

"We will offer some AstraZeneca Covid-19 vaccine doses to elderly homes because they (seniors) must be inoculated under phase two (of the NIP)."

He said the CITF, in collaboration with the Women, Family and Community Development Ministry and Health Ministry's Family Health Development Division held engagement sessions with groups representing elderly homes.

"We have activated community outreach programmes with 50 elderly homes in Selangor alone. In Perak, we sent two teams to two elderly homes today (yesterday)."

Khairy said he would hold a virtual meeting with the Malaysian Residential Aged Care Operators (MyAgeCOpe) group which represents 1,700 elderly homes nationwide on the slow rate of vaccination for elders.

"I am meeting the association tomorrow (today)."

The association was reported as saying it was disappointed with the Health Ministry and the authorities for not getting back to them on its offer to help speed up vaccination at old folks homes.

Meanwhile, Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Adham Baba said there were 478 old folks homes nationwide, including 12 operat-



ed by the government.

Of the private old folks homes, 365 were registered, while the rest operated without a licence.

"There are 17,535 residents at these old folks homes and all of them agreed to be vaccinated," Dr Adham said.

Khairy said the CITF had approved the application by Pharmaniaga to start the pilot project for an industrial vaccination centre (PPV). He said the CITF approved the application as Pharmaniaga was involved in the bottling of the Sinovac vaccine.

He said the approval was given to prevent outbreaks at Pharmaniaga's factory that could lead to the closure of the premises.

"The government has yet to approve any other application for industrial PPVs."

"The CITF has approved only one application by a factory to commence a pilot project involving an industrial PPV and the company is Pharmaniaga."

"Pharmaniaga buys its own vaccines for its factory workers."