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New Straits Times, Malaysia





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REPORTS BY Nuradzimmah Daim and Goh Pei Pei

TO IMPROVE IMMUNITY

'8.75 MILLION TO GET COVID-19 BOOSTER SHOT'

Khaairy says DCA has given conditional approval for Pfizer's Comirnaty vaccine to be used

KUALA LUMPUR

SOME 8.75 million frontliners and those in the high-risk categories are set to receive booster shots soon.

However, questions remain as to how people at risk can register for the jabs and whether those willing to pay for the booster shot could be included.

There are also concerns on the status of individuals who claimed they have low or no antibodies despite having completed the two-dose vaccination. These are among the questions people have raised in social media comments and groups.

Health Minister Khaairy Jamaluddin said the 8.75 million frontliners comprised 600,000 from the health, security and defence sectors, 150,000 immunocompromised patients, three million senior citizens and individuals in long-term care facilities and five million individuals with comorbidities.

The booster doses, he said, would be administered to the people to improve their waning immunity against the virus within a certain period after having been fully vaccinated.

He said the Drug Control Authority (DCA) had given conditional approval for the Comirnaty Covid-19 vaccine by Pfizer to be used as booster shots. The decision was made at a meeting on Oct 8, he added.

"High-risk groups will be given priority for the additional doses (third dose and booster shots) as more than 80 per cent of the adult population have been fully vaccinated.

"The guidelines for administer-



Health personnel preparing to administer Covid-19 vaccines at Dewan SK Demit 2 in Panji, Kota Baru, recently.
 PIC BY NIK ABDULLAH NIK OMAR

ing additional doses are being developed and coordinated by the Health Ministry," he said in reply to a question from Cha Kee Chin (PH-Rasah) yesterday.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob had, on Sept 19, said the third dose of the Covid-19 vaccine would be given to high-risk groups.

Khaairy said the ministry had spent RM3.16 billion or 66 per cent (of the overall RM4.8 billion allocation) for vaccine procurement and logistics up to Sept 15.

"The overall expenditure for the Covid-19 National Immunisation Plan (NIP) is RM3.49 billion or 73 per cent (of the total allocation).

"A total of RM3.9 billion was allocated for vaccine procurement and logistics, and RM900 million for other NIP-related matters like consumables and diluents (RM175 million)," he said in reply to a question from Datuk Ignatius Darell Leiking (Warisan-Penam-pang).

Khaairy said the expenditures also covered the procurement of low dead volume syringes and/or needles to ensure optimum usage of vaccines and reduce wastage of multiple-dose vials.

He said the ministry had spent RM310 million to expedite the vaccination rate in the country through the outsourcing of private medical practitioners, non-

governmental organisations and health-related private companies coordinated by ProtectHealth Corporation Sdn Bhd.

A total of RM227 million was also spent as token payments for volunteers at vaccination centres (PPV), Covid-19 Assessment Centres, Covid-19 Quarantine and Low-risk Treatment Centres and other facilities, he said.

Meanwhile, Science, Technology and Innovation Minister Datuk Seri Dr Adham Baba said 2.96 million foreigners had received at least one dose of the Covid-19 vaccine, with 2.23 million fully vaccinated up to Oct 11.

He said the data on foreign vaccine recipients included those who were inoculated at industry PPV.

"A total of 1,004,798 workers received their first dose and 946,256 completed both doses at industry PPV (up to Oct 11)," he said in reply to a question from Akmal Nasrullah Mohd Nasir (PH-Johor Baru) yesterday.

Dr Adham also said industry PPV played a crucial role in expediting the vaccination exercise for migrant workers without affecting the operations at general PPV.

He said Health Ministry data showed that up to Oct 10, a total of 1,528 factory clusters had been reported with 183,535 people testing positive for Covid-19. Of the total, he said, 253 clusters were active and had been placed under specific control measures.

To a question from Ngeh Koo Ham (PH-Beruas), Dr Adham said the vaccination for non-cit-

izens registered with MySejahtera was done through appointments while walk-in vaccination in most states had been a hit with undocumented migrants.

He said the Science, Technology and Innovation Ministry, through the Covid-19 Immunisation Task Force, had issued vaccination guidelines for foreigners.

In reply to a question from Chan Foong Hin (PH-Kota Kinabalu), he said the vaccination drive at prisons and Immigration depots was ongoing.

In Kuching, Covid-19 booster and third dose shots were given to eligible recipients starting yesterday. Sarawak deputy health director (public health) Dr Rosemawati Ariffin said the doses were given to those with compromised immune systems as a result of disease or medical treatment, totalling 11,900 people.

"Apart from 80,300 senior citizens aged above 60, this will cover 30,340 medical officers and frontliners," she said in a statement yesterday.

She said the shots would be administered at selected government health clinics, private hospitals and private clinics.

Eligible recipients can contact the selected clinics, whose list will be shared on social media platforms, for appointments.

Sarawak has achieved 90 per cent vaccination rate of its adult population, while 75 per cent of those aged between 12 and 17 had completed their first dose.



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SUMMARIES

BID TO BOOST

» REPORT ON PAGE 6 AS 8.75 million people in high-risk groups receive booster shots, questions about how others can register for the jab are being raised. They include those with low to no antibodies after testing, and others willing to pay for an extra dose.

TO IMPROVE IMMUNITY

Khairy says DCA has given conditional approval for Pfizer's Comirnaty vaccine to be used KUALA LUMPUR SOME 8.