

MEF: ‘Set up *Pusat Vaksin Negara* to be self-sufficient for the *Rakyat*’

PETALING JAYA: MEF has called upon the government to look to local experts and resources to deal with issues of long-term vaccine supply and efficacy through the setting up of a national vaccine research centre, or *Pusat Vaksin Negara*.

MEF President Dato’ Dr Syed Hussain Syed Husman J.P said: “The government has done well to set up various centres for vaccination, be it the mega centres, the mobile units as well as the private clinics and hospitals that have been roped in to support efforts, and not to mention the deployment of the armed forces’ medical corps.

“But while we plan the infrastructure of vaccine logistics and centres, there should also be a comprehensive strategy for the supply of vaccines.

“Of Malaysia’s total population of 32.75 million, about one million had received two doses and three million received their first dose, and it appears highly improbable that we would be able to achieve herd immunity by year end.

“A major factor for the slow rate of inoculation is due to delays in getting the vaccines from the suppliers. Besides having to cope with intense global demand, the discovery of new variants had also caused demand to increase with additional requests to resupply for third boosters – which would only add to the delays.

“With the kinds of mutations and variants of Covid emerging, we must accept that the issue is here to stay, and unless we have control of our own vaccines, we will continue to depend on others.”

He said in view of the situation and with the objective of safeguarding the health and safety of the *Rakyat* against Covid-19 and other such future pandemics, it is necessary to set up a national vaccine research centre based on local expertise and resources.

“The government should explore all avenues to overcome the virus and its variants including in depth research and study by our local experts and professionals on the real origins of the virus and independent expert assessment of the prescribed interventions, and take necessary action based on this.

“We should be setting up our own specialised vaccine research centre to look at the long-term prospects of producing our own vaccines.

“Malaysia has excellent scientific academia and research facilities and our local experts are globally recognised having produced vaccines for Nipah virus, and dealt with SARS, H1N1 and others in the past.

“We are proud to have world class medical research in our local universities. Malaysia’s five apex universities – Universiti Malaya, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Universiti Putra Malaysia and Universiti Teknologi Malaysia – have the talent and facilities to conduct proper research and study.

“The proposed research centre could also be in the form of a public-private partnership if the cost of setting is too prohibitive.

“As MEF, we want all our employees to be vaccinated at a rapid phase. As a nation, we must also be prepared to deploy additional vaccine boosters in future.

“Success is in setting up our own vaccine research centre and be self-sufficient for vaccines for our *Rakyat*.

“Having local expert inputs into our own locally produced vaccines would also help reassure those who are still hesitant and unsure about the safety and efficacy of the vaccines.

“In this way we can avoid future lockdowns and return to normalcy.”

For further information, contact the MEF Secretariat at 03-7955-7778 or fax 03-7955-9008 or email mef-hq@mef.org.my.

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