

Open up with SOPs but keep state borders closed as the vaccinated are not fully protected against Covid-19 variants

PETALING JAYA: The Movement Control Order (MCO) restrictions on interstate travel should remain enforced while businesses within the states should be allowed to operate with strict compliance to SOPs.

MEF President Dato' Dr Syed Hussain Syed Husman J.P., in supporting the position of the Ministry of Health (MOH) to not ease restrictions prematurely, said MEF supported the MOH because of concerns that Covid-19 could still spread with the Delta variant as the current dominant strain in Malaysia.

"With the emergence of the Delta variant, MEF had advised employers to exercise extra care to protect employees, including those who received two doses of vaccines," said Dato' Dr Syed Hussain today.

"The National Covid-19 Immunisation Programme (NIP) has done well to encourage the public to be inoculated but this does not mean those vaccinated cannot be infected.

"The (Covid-19) variants that are dominant right now are more transmissible and highly contagious.

"We are also concerned that other variants such as Alpha, possible Zeta, Delta Plus, Lambda and other unknown variants have been detected in various parts of the world.

"For example, it was reported that in the UK about 35 per cent of those infected and require hospital treatment had completed both doses of vaccine.

"We need to carefully study this phenomenon and its causes of spread so that we can plan better for our protection."

Dato' Dr Syed Hussain also urged the authorities to open up all the economic sectors in the areas within the state borders as this would allow the businesses and the economy to recover, as well as revitalise the job market.

"We strongly urge the authorities to allow businesses that are now closed to be opened without further delay because they have been suffering for almost two years now," he said.

“We cannot wait to move to Phase 2 or 3 of the National Recovery Plan based on the number of daily Covid-19 infections because the more screening that is conducted, the positive results will increase accordingly.

“That is normal as it is already endemic in our community and we must accept this as reality.

“Therefore, we urge the authorities to allow all non-essential sectors to open including, sports, barbers and salons, but excluding the night entertainment industry.

“And those who received two doses of the vaccines should be rewarded by allowing them to dine-in at restaurants.

“Except for the red zones, travel within the state should not be restricted. Interstate travel should be the last restriction to be removed.

“In taking this approach, we could isolate the spread of infections to see patterns of concern.”

He said MEF views the position of the MOH on the variants seriously due to the many uncertainties regarding the safety and health of employees, including vaccinated employees.

“At the same time, we also need the economy to open up and for livelihoods to normalise.”

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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