

# MEF: Let bosses decide on leave

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PETALING JAYA: Let employers decide on whether or not to grant paid leave for workers to get their Covid-19 jabs, says the Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF).

Employers' role and responsibility in achieving herd immunity against Covid-19 is critical, especially as vaccination of workers would not be carried out on the same day, said MEF president Datuk Dr Syed Hussain Syed Husman.

"But whether the employer grants paid leave to the employee should remain at the discretion of the employer and not be made compulsory.

"Furthermore, one day of paid leave would cost the private sector employers in Malaysia about RM904mil," he said in a statement yesterday

Syed Hussain was responding to Human Resources Minister Datuk Seri M. Saravanan's comments on Saturday that employers should grant leave to their staff to go for the vaccination.

Such leave, Saravanan said, would give Malaysians the confidence to proceed to be vaccinated as some were still worried about the jab.

However, he maintained that this was up to the employer as the government could not declare a special holiday for this.

Syed Hussain said that responsible employers must support the national immunisation programme in any way possible, as the safety of employees was of paramount concern.

He, however, also said that it should be up to the employer whether or not to grant paid leave to their workers to get vaccinated.

"MEF strongly encourages private sector employers to educate their employees by creating awareness on the benefits of Covid-19 vaccination, and also to allow employees to take time off work to get the jab.

“With more awareness and getting full support from their employers, employees as well as their families would be more confident about taking the jab as some are still wary of the Covid-19 vaccine,” he said.

He also suggested the government allow companies to send their employees to vaccination centres in batches in order to facilitate logistics and transport arrangements.

Recently, Khairy Jamaluddin, the minister coordinating the National Covid-19 Immunisation Programme, said there were several suggestions raised at the meeting of the Covid-19 Vaccine Supply Access Guarantee Special Committee with the Human Resources Ministry, such as calling for employers to grant “vaccine leave”.