

‘Review of close contact quarantine requirements’

NATION

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PETALING JAYA: Businesses will not be able to operate smoothly and, worse, be forced to shut down if the government maintains the current quarantine requirement for close contact.

The Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF) president Datuk Dr Syed Hussain Syed Husman said the government should review the requirement which seems impractical to be implemented especially with the wild spread of the Omicron variant.

“A close contact who has completed the primary dose and booster shot with no symptoms should be allowed to work while those with symptoms should be asked to undergo RTK antigen test before being allowed to work.

“This is in line with the ministry’s new rule for its healthcare workers who no longer need to be quarantined even when they are classified as close contact.

“MEF is of the view that only those with incomplete vaccination should be quarantined if they are identified as close contact and this revision needs to be done as the nation is transitioning to the endemic stage on April 1.

“Without this adjustment, employers and the business community will face hard times to manage their manpower and operations,” he explained.

The current SOP which took effect on March 1 requires close contacts who were symptomatic to undergo five days of home quarantine.

On a related note, SME Association of Malaysia president Ding Hong Sing lamented that the cost of testing has become a bane to employers.

“Those who have completed their seven-day quarantine, we will have them tested once. As for close contacts, we will test them at an interval of three days once,” he said.

“A test kit costs around RM6 and I have about 118 employees,” he said while adding that it is expensive to test close contacts

Therefore, he hoped the government will look into the issue of the cost of test kits.