

Docs in the dark about booster shots

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Private clinics are supposed to administer the booster shots but they are complaining that the health ministry has not contacted them on the details.

PETALING JAYA: Private general practitioners (GP) are still in the dark about their participation in the rollout of booster shots and third vaccine doses.

Many of these clinic doctors have not received any details about the programme, which officially began yesterday, from state health departments.

In a statement, the Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) said there has been a lack of engagement by state health departments which are supposed to decide which clinics would be roped in to help administer these additional doses.

"There has been no planning and no coordination on the ground, at least not that we know of.

"We hope all GP clinics which had functioned as vaccination centres will be allowed to participate and not just a select few. The selection criteria has not been made known," said MMA president Dr Koh Kar Chai.

He said more than 1,600 GP clinics had helped in the initial phases of the country's vaccination efforts, but they have not been informed by state health authorities about giving the booster shots.

"MMA wonders if it will be the same old story again where the state health departments will notify GPs only at the eleventh hour. As it is, many GPs are already inundated with calls from the public inquiring about the availability of these booster shots.

"MMA understands that there will be around 8.75 million people who will receive the third or booster doses, hence the rollout needs to be properly planned and coordinated.

"There is a need for efficiency and speed in this planned third dose and booster vaccination programme."

Koh said this "poor implementation" by state authorities must be addressed urgently if the rollout of additional doses is to prove successful.

Yesterday, health minister Khairy Jamaluddin announced that these additional doses would be administered immediately.

He said private clinics would be put in charge of providing booster shots to frontline workers and senior citizens aged above 60. They must have been fully vaccinated more than six months ago to receive this third dose.

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