

'Frontliners doing superb job'

NATION 

Wednesday, 25 Mar 2020



KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysians, medical associations and non-governmental associations agree frontliners are doing an excellent job.

They also commend Health director-general Datuk Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah (*pic*) for taking the lead in braving the crisis.

The most daring move Dr Noor Hisham initiated was to advise the government for a movement control order (MCO), an order that has never been imposed before, said the Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) president Dr N. Ganabaskaran.

He said that based on Dr Noor Hisham's assessment and advice, certain difficult decisions had to be made, such as travel restrictions and also the ongoing MCO.

"These decisions have a direct impact on the country's economy affecting people's daily lives but these are important decisions to be made and at such a crucial time.

"It takes good leadership to make these decisions," he said.

Meanwhile, he said MMA started offering psychological first aid services for healthcare workers to support them during this challenging time beginning yesterday with 24 psychiatrists nationwide providing counselling via phone or web chat.

Engage founding chairperson Thomas Fann said Dr Noor Hisham staying calm, professional and clear in his briefings of the situation helped alleviate unnecessary fears.

He also commended him for allowing foreign workers to be tested for free should they be suspected of being infected.

Fann said being in close contact with a positive case, he had gone for a Covid-19 test last week and the whole process took almost five hours due to the high number of people turning up for testing.

"The protocols that the medical team have to observe were strict.

"After every test, all equipment used was sanitised and the outer PPE gowns and gloves were disposed.

"I admire their dedication and kindness to all of us," he said.

The NGO engages the public on issues about democracy, human rights and good governance.

Citizens' Health Initiative member Dr Chee Heng Leng said Dr Noor Hisham performed in a credible and competent way.

She said Malaysia lost time during the political crisis at the end of last month and political leaders were not on the ball in terms of Covid-19 global developments.

"Medical staff are affected by the increasing workload and stress as the crisis continues, as evident through personal postings on social media and other communications.

"The ministry has to look into this and mobilise expertise and resources from universities to look after our frontliners," she said.

For example in the United States, the Harvard TH Chan School of Public Health and partners have launched an initiative called 'First Responders First' to provide access to online workshops, virtual training and coaching to support and sustain front-line care providers, she said.

Malaysian Pharmaceutical Society president Amrahi Buang said the ministry has done an excellent job from the beginning of the outbreak in China.

"The second wave from the tabligh cluster has created havoc and with the recent number of positive cases, it will be a herculean task for it to face the widespread.

“After a week of the MCO, we are still seeing increasing numbers of positive cases and ICU cases. It will get worse in the coming days.

“The medical staff will be burnt out soon, and reinforcement is needed,” he said.

He said Dr Noor Hisham was experienced with handling medical disasters such as MERS-CoV and H1N1 infections as well as the chemical spillage in Sungei Kim Kim in Johor and was well-versed with standard protocols under Crisis Preparedness and Response Centre.

“Like everyone else, he is near burn out too.

“Hope he will be able to get reinforcement from non-Health Ministry facilities and private sector healthcare facilities,” he said, adding everyone must play their part, especially people by staying home.

“This is to flatten the curve of Covid-19 infection in the country,” he said.

Related stories:

[Star Foundation to help frontliners](#)

[Many healthcare workers have to make sacrifices](#)

TAGS / KEYWORDS:

Movement Control Order (MCO) , Battling Covid-19

What do you think of this article?

It is insightful

Not in my interest

100% readers found this article useful

Copyright © 1995-2020 Star Media Group Berhad (10894D)
Best viewed on Chrome browsers.