

# MMA: Face masks still relevant for at-risk groups

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*Dr Koh said MMA welcomes the relaxed SOP as announced by Health Minister Khairy Jamaluddin yesterday. – Malay Mail photo*

KUCHING (April 28): Even though there is some flexibility on wearing face masks when outdoors, it is hoped that the public will make the right call on when it is appropriate to wear them, says Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) president Dr Koh Kar Chai.

“The wearing of face masks still has a role to play especially when indoors or on public transport.

“Bear in mind that many children are still yet to be vaccinated while older adults and those with comorbidities can still be at risk of severe Covid-19,” he said in a statement yesterday.

Dr Koh said MMA welcomes the relaxed Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) as announced by Health Minister Khairy Jamaluddin yesterday.

“We view this as another positive development in the management of the pandemic and another step closer to endemicity. We cannot be in a state of perpetuity as far the SOPs are concerned.

“Overall, we view the relaxed SOPs as a practical step, especially in this phase of the pandemic where more normalcy will help revive our economy as well as relieve the mental stress that has accompanied us since the beginning of the pandemic,” he said.

He said this relaxation of SOP is not because the country is out of the pandemic but because people need to live with the virus in their midst and they must not let their guards down yet.

Dr Koh further noted that the relaxation for testing requirements for travellers entering the country is an accepted practice for many countries that have opened their borders to travellers in this stage, where the pandemic is under significantly improved control globally especially in countries with high vaccination rates.

“We are concerned about doing away with travel insurance at this moment when we do not know if the full reopening of borders will lead to an increased load on our healthcare services should there be an increase in cases albeit mild ones.

“Maintaining the need for travel insurance will take the load off the public healthcare system should the unthinkable arise,” he said.

He said MMA also welcomes the Health Ministry’s decision to drop the requirement to scan the MySejahtera app before entering premises as there is no longer a need for the app for the purpose of contact tracing at this stage where the virus is already circulating in the community.

On the protocols set for the Hari Raya celebrations, he said they are well thought out and comprehensive.

“We hope those celebrating will still prioritise safety when they visit their loved ones. It is always better to be safe than sorry.

“A simple self-test before heading back to the hometown can be a lifesaver,” he added.