

MMA lauds government's move to ease Covid-19 SOPs, says curbs can't be endless

Wednesday, 27 Apr 2022 08:41 PM MYT
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MMA president Dr Koh Kar Chai said that the association viewed today's announcements as another positive development in the management of the pandemic and one step closer to Covid-19 endemicity.
— Picture by Hari Anggara

KUALA LUMPUR, April 27 — The Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) today lauded the government's move to further relax Covid-19 standard operating procedures (SOPs), saying these "cannot be in a state of perpetuity."

MMA president Dr Koh Kar Chai said that the association viewed today's announcements as another positive development in the management of the pandemic and one step closer to Covid-19 endemicity.

"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 relieving the mental stress that has accompanied us since the beginning of the pandemic.

"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,” Dr Koh said in a statement.

However, he expressed concern about eliminating the requirement for travel insurance, saying it was unknown if the full reopening of borders could lead to an increased load on local healthcare services.

Dr Koh said that maintaining the need for travel insurance would take the load off the public healthcare system should the worst case scenario occur.

Earlier, Health Minister Khairy Jamaluddin announced that the Covid-19 insurance will no longer be needed for non-Malaysians to enter Malaysia beginning May 1, alongside the end of mandatory masking outdoors and MySejahtera registrations.

“The wearing of face masks still has a role to play especially when in doors or on public transport. Though there is some flexibility on face mask wearing when outdoors, we hope the public will make the right call on when it is appropriate to wear their facemasks. 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,” Dr Koh said.

He also welcomed the Health Ministry’s decision to drop the requirement to scan the MySejahtera app before entering premises, saying that there is no longer a need for the app for the purpose of contact tracing now, when the virus is already circulating in the community.

“The protocols set for the Hari Raya celebrations are also 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.

“A reminder that this relaxation of SOPs is not because we are out of the pandemic but because we need to live with the virus in our midst and we must not let our guard down as yet,” he added.