

Medicine shortage: Private hospitals, pharma groups offer solutions

By [Dhesegaan Bala Krishnan](#) - July 6, 2022 @ 5:48pm



Pharmaceutical companies have agreed to give early notification to healthcare providers on possible scarcity or discontinuation of certain medicines to remedy the current medical supply shortage. - NSTP/SAIFULLIZAN TAMADI

KUALA LUMPUR: Pharmaceutical companies have agreed to give early notification to healthcare providers on possible scarcity or discontinuation of certain medicines to remedy the current medical supply shortage.

The Association of Private Hospitals Malaysia (APHM) and the Pharmaceutical Association of Malaysia (PhAMA), in a joint statement today, said the notification mechanism would also include other stakeholders such as the National Pharmaceutical Regulatory Agency (NPRA), Health Ministry and the Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) for effective communications.

Both associations also agreed to step up coordination and solidarity to ease borrowing of medicines in times of critical supply shortage.

The consensus was reached during a dialogue session between the chief executive officers of 17 private hospitals and seven multinational pharmaceutical companies recently.

"Sporadic medicine shortages are not a new occurrence in the healthcare ecosystem.

"However, both APHM and PhAMA acknowledge that the volatile conditions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and conflict in certain parts of the world have disrupted business operations and logistics in unprecedented ways.

"Despite the global issues of logistic bottlenecks and labour shortage, we agreed that there should be no compromise on patient safety and treatment outcomes.

"This is where all parties involved need to stay committed to co-create short and long-term solutions that will enhance the healthcare landscape and add value to care delivery.

"Both associations will work together in engaging with the Pharmacy Services Programme (PSP) and NPRA to improve access to medicines to patients.

"We also agreed to embrace digitisation of healthcare to speed up manual processes such as implementing electronic labelling of paper inserts to resolve issues of labour shortage and dashboard or app for medicine stocks monitoring.

"We will also undertake continuous engagement on medicine pricing and health financing in view of the significant increases in cost of logistics, active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs), labour and others," they said.

Last month, MMA president Dr Koh Kar Chai raised concerns that the acute shortage of medicine supply in several parts of the country could affect the management of patients' healthcare.