

Open up Covid-19 testing services at airports, says MMA

By **Hakimie Amrie Hisamudin** - December 14, 2021 9:15 AM

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MMA president Dr Koh Kar Chai says a high fee for airport testing is not justified. (Bernama pic)

PETALING JAYA: Covid-19 testing at airports should not be held by any kind of monopoly, the Malaysian Medical Association said today.

MMA president Dr Koh Kar Chai said the government should allow competition which would reduce pricing and enhance the services offered.

"We are against any kind of monopoly in the screening services being provided," he said. "It is an unhealthy practice as the ones who ultimately suffer are the consumers who have to pay for the tests at a price dictated and controlled by one party," he told FMT.

The Malaysian Association of Tour and Travel Agents has complained of the high cost of Covid-19 tests for incoming travellers, saying it will discourage travel into Malaysia.



Dr Koh Kar Chai.

A source who declined to be named asked why Covid-19 screening services at eight facilities at KLIA and KLIA2 were handled by a private healthcare company, effectively granting it a monopoly. He also questioned the "tremendous" price increase of the RT-PCR test, mandatory for all incoming travellers, as other countries charged less.

Koh added that it was not justifiable to charge a high fee for the test just because it was a requirement needed for entry into the country.

"The current cost of screening at our airports can certainly be reduced further, even after taking into consideration the high cost involved in providing such facilities in airports," he added.

Former deputy health minister Dr Lee Boon Chye suggested that RTK-Ag tests be accepted once the Omicron variant of Covid-19 was no longer a threat.

Malaysia remains one of the few still requiring up to three RT-PCR tests before travellers are allowed to enter the country. Singapore and the Philippines have given the green light for RTK-Ag tests to be used but have since reverted to RT-PCR tests because of the Omicron variant.

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