

AKHBAR : BH AHAD  
MUKA SURAT : 19  
RUANGAN : NASIONAL

# RM21.5j naik taraf fasiliti kesihatan daif di Sabah

15 projek siap sepenuhnya, 43 lagi dijangka November ini

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**Tawau:** Kementerian Kesihatan (KKM) sedang dan akan menaikkan taraf 58 klinik dan fasiliti kesihatan daif di Sabah membatinkan peruntukan berjumlah RM21.5 juta.

Menterinya, Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad, berkata daripada jumlah itu sebanyak 15 projek telah siap sepenuhnya manakala baki 43 lagi sedang dalam proses pelaksanaan dan dijangka dapat disiapkan menjelang penghujung November tahun ini.

Beliau berkata, Hospital Tawau dan Hospital Dutches of Kent Sandakan juga akan dinaiki taraf kepada status hospital negeri (Hospital Utama Berpakar) yang setaraf dengan Hospital Queens Elizabeth (QEH) di Kota Kinabalu.

"Ia bagi merapatkan jurang fasiliti kesihatan yang agak besar dengan jumlah kepakaran bakal mengisi perjawatan termasuk jumlah jururawat yang ditempatkan selepas selesai menjalani latihan asas (*post basic training*)," katanya ketika ditemui media pada program Madani Afiat dan Jelajah Agenda Nasional Malaysia - Sabah Maju Jaya, Negeri Sabah 2024, di



Dzulkefly (dua dari kanan) melepaskan peserta Berjalan 10,000 Langkah pada program Madani Afiat dan Jelajah Agenda Nasional Malaysia Sihat di Padang Bandaran Tawau, semalam. (Foto BERNAMA)

sini, semalam.

Terdahulu, beliau menyempurnakan Flag Off Mobilisasi MADANI Afiat dan berjalan kaki 10,000 langkah, di Padang Perbandaran Tawau, di sini.

#### Realisasi reformasi kesihatan

Mengulas mengenai program itu, Dr Dzulkefly berkata Sabah adalah negeri pertama yang melaksanakan program MADANI Afiat dan Jelajah Agenda Nasional Malaysia Sihat (ANMS) bagi 2024 dan mendapat sambutan memberangsangkan daripada masyarakat.

Katanya, penganjuran program itu bertujuan, merakyatkan (KKM) dengan merealisasikan reformasi kesihatan dalam Tonggak Kedua, Kertas Putih Kesihatan 2023 yang menyarankan peralihan fokus penyampaian perkhidmatan kesihatan daripada *sick care* kepada *health care*.

"Pemilihan istilah 'afiat' yang bermaksud sihat atau sejahtera itu sendiri bersesuaian dengan peranan KKM, selain MADANI Afiat yang bertujuan, mendekati dan menyantuni masyarakat secara langsung bersama pe-

mimpin melalui aktiviti *touch-point* seperti lawatan dari rumah ke rumah.

"Program ini turut diperkaya dengan agenda Sabah Maju Jaya (SMJ) melalui perkongsian pin-tar Persekutuan-Negeri sejak tahun 2022.

"Penjenamaan khusus Jelajah ANMS-SMJ turut bertujuan untuk mengukuhkan komunikasi kesihatan demi membudayakan hidup sihat dan melestarikan persekitaran yang menyuburkan penentu sosial kesihatan (*social determinants of health*) dalam kalangan rakyat Sabah," katanya.

AKHBAR : SUNDAY STAR  
MUKA SURAT : 5  
RUANGAN : NATION

# Don't lower your guard, say experts

## Sick workers should keep self-testing and masking even without Covid-19 HSO

By MARTIN CARVALHO  
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**PETALING JAYA:** People must practise self-discipline and observe the standard operating procedure (SOP) at the workplace when the strict home surveillance order (HSO) is discontinued on July 15, say health experts.

Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) president Dr Azizhan Abdul Aziz said current measures against Covid-19 are sufficient, with Malaysia having a high rate of vaccination and as such, there is no need for the strict HSO or quarantine procedure.

"The management of severe Covid-19 cases has improved significantly, with the World Health Organisation also declaring that the pandemic is no longer a public health emergency or global threat.

"We have had three years of experience with the pandemic

and we should all be experts on preventing Covid-19 by now," she said when contacted yesterday.

Dr Azizhan said the way forward for everyone is to use the knowledge learnt from the pandemic since it first struck in 2020.

She added that existing safety measures could still be adopted by both employers and workers.

"Do a self test and wear a mask if you are experiencing Covid-19 symptoms.

"This includes implementing self-isolation until the symptoms subside," she said.

However, Dr Azizhan cautioned that Covid-19 can still cause severe symptoms in older persons and those with co-morbidities.

"Wear a mask when visiting a healthcare facility or nursing home," she added.

On Friday, the Health Ministry announced the discontinuation of the HSO for those with Covid-19 from July 15.

It also said that those who test positive will no longer be required to report their Covid-19 self-test results to the MySejahtera app.

The number of infections dropped by 77.9% to 3,810 last week compared with 17,256 in the first week of the year, with no new variants detected in the country.

Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia community health expert Prof Dr Sharifa Ezat Wan Puteh said dealing with Covid-19 cases at the workplace will depend on whether employees had previously contracted Covid-19 but had received prior vaccinations.

"The employee can continue to work without quarantine.

"But if the worker has not been vaccinated for some reason and has been found positive with symptoms, there is possibility that he or she can infect others.

"If the other workers around him have been vaccinated, then the infected person only needs to

rest," she said.

Prof Sharifa Ezat said employers should maintain certain precautionary measures for workers who are ill.

"If someone is sick and not sure of their Covid-19 status or they may be infected with some other virus, it is good to continue wearing a face mask.

"The employee should also get some rest at home for any upper respiratory tract infection," she added.

Prof Sharifa Ezat said the best protection after July 15 would be for a person to get vaccination booster shots.

Public health physician Datuk Dr Zainal Ariffin Omar said Covid-19 should now be treated like any other infectious disease such as influenza, with both employers and employees having a responsibility to play their part to prevent its spread.

"Employers should ask their workers to get tested and treated.

"It also advisable to see a physician and get a medical certificate (MC) to rest at home to prevent the infection from spreading to others," he said.

He added that employers should also continue with precautions such as wearing a mask, maintaining hygiene and practising physical distancing if necessary.

Universiti Malaya epidemiology and public health expert Prof Dr Sanjay Rampal said the lifting of the HSO can be implemented without the need for any additional SOP at the workplace.

"Our population has mostly been vaccinated.

"The risk of complications is low for the current circulating variants," he added.

However, Prof Sanjay said surveillance should continue.

"Employees who feel unwell must see a doctor and based on the diagnosis, get an MC to stay home and rest," he added.

## Stand by workplace SOP, urge bosses and workers

**PETALING JAYA:** While the lifting of the Covid-19 Home Surveillance Order (HSO) rule is welcomed by employers and workers, they want self-testing and isolation procedures to continue.

SME Association of Malaysia president Datuk William Ng said most businesses already have an established standard operating procedure (SOP) for employees to report in sick, as well as provisions for medical leave and emergencies.

"With Malaysia transitioning into the 'living with Covid-19' phase, we need to treat Covid-19 like any other infection.

"Employees should be encouraged to visit a doctor and stay at home based on medical advice," he said when contacted yesterday.

Ng said most of the practices adopted by small and medium enterprises during the pandemic should continue as part of the new normal after the HSO

requirement is lifted on July 15.

Among them are physical distancing, wearing masks and asking infected employees to work from home.

"Businesses must continue to develop the SOP for reporting illnesses in their workplace as they foster confidence.

"When an employee reports an illness or infection, they should receive appropriate treatment and support," said Ng.

Joshua Soon, 30, who works

with a property developer in Petaling Jaya, agreed with the lifting of the HSO rule as Covid-19 has become as prevalent as influenza.

"It is hard to protect (ourselves) against Covid-19 as many do not wear masks nowadays.

"The best thing for an employee who is positive for Covid-19 to do is to practise self-discipline.

"Be responsible and stay home to avoid spreading the virus in the workplace," he said when contacted yesterday.

Wong Kok Keong, 45, a photographer from Kuala Lumpur, suggested that employees who have been infected with Covid-19 should be allowed to work from home to avoid infecting others.

"Despite the pandemic slowing down, people with low immunity are still susceptible to reinfection, which could pose a health risk to others," he added.

Wong said he would continue to wear a mask when working in crowded places or at events.

## Fifteen Sabah health clinics fully upgraded to date

**TAWAU:** Fifteen out of 58 dilapidated health clinics in Sabah have been completely upgraded so far, says Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad.

The government, through the Health Ministry, has allocated RM21.5mil to upgrade the 58 clinics, which were part of 70 wooden clinic buildings in the state, he added.

"Upgrading work is currently being conducted for the remaining 43 clinics. We hope to complete them by November 2024.

"We are also monitoring the 58 of 70 wooden health clinics. We will tackle them all and carry on in 2025. All the upgrades will cost RM31.6mil," he told reporters after officiating the Madani Afiat and the state-level Healthy Malaysia National Agenda Tour programme here yesterday.

He said that the programme was held to promote healthy lifestyles as a measure to prevent disease and to boost health literacy, including early health screenings, Bernama reported.

"Based on data, health screenings under the national health screening initiatives in Sabah have risen from 1,017,095 (2022) to 1,538,727 (2023), showing a rising level of awareness in the state," Dzulkefly said, adding that efforts to boost the health level require a



**All in this together:** Dzulkefly (centre) participating in the Walk 10,000 Steps event during the Madani Afiat and Healthy Malaysia National Agenda Tour at Padang Bandaran Tawau. — Bernama

nationwide approach.

He also shared that the Tawau and Sandakan Hospitals will be uplifted to state hospitals with major specialist levels – a move that will bridge the wide gap in terms of facilities and expertise.

Dzulkefly added that the new Tawau Hospital project will be handed over to the Health

Ministry next month.

In his speech, the minister said that last year's national health and morbidity survey revealed that many Malaysians are suffering from non-communicable diseases.

"One in three Malaysians have high cholesterol (33.3%), high blood pressure (29.2%) and one

out of six have diabetes (15.6%).

"Most are due to two factors: improper and unbalanced eating, and unhealthy lifestyles. Overall, one in seven Malaysians have kidney problems due to the lack of early detection and intervention," he said, adding that 9,000 new patients annually resort to dialysis to continue living.