

6 June 2021

JOINT PRESS STATEMENT: VACCINATION CENTRES IN SHOPPING MALLS

This press statement represents the view of the following associations representing the shopping mall and retail industries nation-wide in Malaysia as follows:

- Persatuan Pengurusan Kompleks Malaysia (PPK) (or Malaysia Shopping Malls Association) <http://ppkm.org.my/>
- Malaysia Retailers Association (MRA) <https://mra.com.my/>
- Malaysia Retail Chain Association (MRCA) <https://www.mrca.org.my/>
- Bumiputra Retailers Organisation (BRO)

The recent bric-a-brac controversy on the number of companies approved to operate during this current lockdown is most unfounded. It is not the absolute number that is the issue. The criterion should be whether those who are rightfully permitted to operate are expeditiously allowed to do so. The simplistic understanding is that "essential services" must be available for the public to access and purchase. What is not so obvious to the man-in-the street is all the antecedent support activities from the raw materials, production, packaging, delivery of the entire supply chain constitute "essential services ". The sole criterion is whether those allowed to operate have correctly and expeditiously been issued with the requisite permits to do so. The absolute number is irrelevant.

Lockdowns are merely temporary reliefs at a very damaging and severe cost to lives and livelihoods and to the business and economy of the country. The ultimate real solution is to accelerate the vaccination of the population to achieve herd immunity. What is urgently needed is to maximise the opportunity during this lockdown to implement this acceleration of the vaccination programme.

There have been announcements of the expected increase in delivery of much needed vaccines this month. However, the capacity to ramp up vaccinations seems to be stuck awaiting approvals. Thousands of doctors in private practice have been awaiting to start vaccination at their clinics and apparently the logistics to do so seems to be onerous and long including "training" and convoluted supply/delivery of vaccines and the limited number of vaccines daily may not make it worthwhile to partake in this programme.

We applaud the announcement that 500,000 persons involved in the retail business and the shopping mall industry have been recognised as "frontliners" and to be vaccinated as soon as possible. To this end, shopping malls have been invited to provide the venue and facilities to set-up Vaccination Centres within their malls. It is worthy to note that the shopping malls have enthusiastically responded and some 50-60 malls have expressed interest. The malls have offered to deeply subsidise this program by only charging a notional RM10 per dose out of the RM100 to RM150 real cost plus RM15 per dose to be collected and paid to Protect Health Corporation for the supply of doctors/nurses/medical officers. Therefore, with 2 doses per course, the total charge is RM50 per course). Therefore, we look forward to the expeditious roll out of this programme at shopping malls for our frontliners as we are more than able and willing to play our role and contribute to the national agenda.

On the other hand, according to a press report by Codeblue on 1 June ref: <https://codeblue.galencentre.org/2021/06/01/government-denies-charging-for-malls-covid-19-vaccine-rollout-supply-unknown/> , ProtectHealth Corporation has “*denied collecting payments from shopping centres*” so assuming this is correct, then there will be no fees chargeable for the services of the doctors/nurses/medical officers sent by them to the PPVs at the malls. We do acknowledge and confirm that throughout the planning the vaccine will be given and delivered free by the government to the PPVs.

On the other hand there are so many reports of other privatisation schemes that charge between RM100 to RM190 per dose ie RM200 to RM380 per course of 2 doses. In parallel, the Government is also launching more public vaccination centres and mobile vaccination facilities. Kudos to these great efforts. All these proposals are meant to increase the capacity for vaccination and should be enthusiastically welcomed and not to be viewed as unfair competition. The public have choices to determine which venue to select which is best meet their desire for speed, convenience, choice of vaccines etc.

What is of utmost urgency is that we take this lockdown period to immediately enable all the schemes and proposals to be implemented and be able to function before this lockdown is over. The experience of so many countries have proven that the only real solution to confidently and sustainably re-open and rebuild the economy and livelihoods is to vaccinate the majority of the population to reach herd immunity. These countries have already a head start to recover and rebuild their economy and we must not be left behind, to then having to work doubly hard to catch up.

We fight a common battle and urgently need all hands and resources on board.

LIVES and LIVELIHOODS MATTER.

Thank you.