



Patron: His Royal Highness, Sultan of Perak, Sultan Nazrin Muizzuddin Shah

# ACADEMY OF MEDICINE OF MALAYSIA

3 October 2020

## PRESS STATEMENT

### All Levels of Society Must Comply with SOPs

The Academy of Medicine of Malaysia (AMM) is concerned by the sharp increase in number of COVID-19 cases following the Sabah state elections which took place on 26 September 2020. As of [2 October 2020](#), there are 1,540 active cases, with 22 of those infected currently in the intensive care unit (ICU) compared to just four cases [one week prior](#).

As it will take time to obtain a vaccine that can eradicate the virus, everyone must learn to balance living with COVID-19 with other aspects of public life, such as education, economic activities, social and religious practices, and democratic rights. A strong economy and maintaining a healthy society during the pandemic are not mutually exclusive. The economy will not recover if our infection rates continue to grow; conversely, health outcomes will also be affected if our economy is not doing well.

We recognise that another movement control order (MCO) may have serious consequences for the national economy, impacting low-income households and small businesses the most. Therefore, we must not let our guard down. Every Malaysian and resident of Malaysia must follow the guidelines set by the authorities especially while out in public. Remember to wear a mask, maintain good hand hygiene and physical distance from others at all times. Hold off on any public gatherings, be it political or otherwise, and avoid crowded and confined spaces as these are high-risk areas for infection.

We support the Ministry of Health's decision to enforce mandatory testing for returnees from Sabah. We urge returnees to not rely on a single test, especially if it is an antigen rapid test kit (RTK), and undergo 14-day quarantine. [RTK tests](#) have 85% test sensitivity and may produce a false negative result. Those who were in red zones during the election should obtain an RT-PCR swab test and undergo testing on the 13<sup>th</sup> day of quarantine as is mandated for overseas returnees.

Besides that, we urge the government to enforce mandatory quarantine in designated quarantine centres for Sabah returnees. It has been proven in other countries, such as China and Singapore where compliance rates are high, that home quarantines are not as effective in curbing spread. Everyone who visited a red zone during the election period should undergo 14-day quarantine in a quarantine centre. If home surveillance orders (HSO) are to be followed, there must be equal enforcement and accountability of the persons-under-investigation.

Malaysians must remain calm and united in fighting this outbreak. We have succeeded at flattening the curve once before. We must do it again, acting quickly and decisively to curb its spread. Everyone must play their part because an outbreak anywhere is an outbreak everywhere.

### **We, the under-signed:**

**Academy of Medicine of Malaysia** (Professor Dr Rosmawati Mohamed, Master)  
College of Anaesthesiologists (Dato Dr Jahizah Hassan, President)  
College of Dental Specialists (Professor Dato' Dr Lian Chin Boon, President)  
College of Emergency Physicians (Dr Ridzuan Dato' Mohd Isa, President)  
College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (Professor Datuk Dr Siti Zawiah Omar, President)  
College of Ophthalmologists (Dr Nur Fariza Ngah, President)  
College of Paediatrics (Professor Dr Thong Meow Keong, President)  
College of Pathologists (Professor Dr Cheong Soon Keng, President)  
College of Physicians (Dr Letchuman Ramanathan, President)  
College of Public Health Medicine (Dato' Indera Dr Sha'ari Ngadiman, President)  
College of Radiology (Professor Dr Norlisah Ramli, President)  
College of Surgeons (Professor Dr April Camilla Roslani, President)

**(The Academy of Medicine of Malaysia, embracing 11 Colleges and 15 Chapters, is a registered body representing medical specialists in Malaysia)**

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