

Rising trend continues if vaccination rate still low

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KOTA KINABALU: The trend of positive Covid-19 cases in Sabah is expected to continue to rise if the state's vaccination rate still remains low and there is lack of physical distancing, which are two factors that make the public vulnerable to the virus.

Associate Professor Dr Richard Avol, a public health physician with Universiti Malaysia Sabah's (UMS) Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences (FPSK), said based on the daily trend of Covid-19 cases from June 1 to 18, it is predicted to increase from 2,000 to 2,500 cases in the next two or three weeks.

Therefore, he stressed that priority should be given to efforts to reduce the number of Sabahans exposed to Covid-19 infection through the vaccination programme that is being carried out in the state.

"Reducing the vulnerable



Dr Richard Avol

population (to Covid-19) through vaccination is important because if the vulnerable population is increased by only 30 per cent, the daily number of cases could increase to 3,500 to 3,700 cases in the next two to three weeks," he said in a statement on Thursday.

However, he said efforts to increase the number of fully vaccinated population in the state would take some time, therefore preparations needed to be done from the beginning



Dr Mohammad Saffree Jeffree

to face the possibility of a high increase in cases.

A similar sentiment was also acknowledged by UMS dean of FPSK, Professor Dr Mohammad Saffree Jeffree that vaccination is the most effective method to curb the increasing trend of daily Covid-19 positive cases in Sabah which has exceeded 3,000 cases a day.

He said to launch the effort, his team had mobilised staff to implement a mobile vaccination

"outreach" programme in the villages as well as the Enhanced Movement Control Order (EMCO) areas in collaboration with the Sabah Health Department.

Meanwhile, the vice-chancellor of UMS, Professor Datuk Dr Taufiq Yap Yun Hin said only with the implementation of the Covid-19 National Immunisation Programme (PICK) as a whole can the increasing number of cases in Sabah be dealt with.

He said to make PICK a success; the UMS Institution of Higher Learning Vaccination Centre (PPV IPT) had provided 83,059 doses of vaccination to the public around Kota Kinabalu since it opened on June 14.

"We do not want to overlook any community that has not been vaccinated because we are worried that they will carry the infection into the community. This is our concern," he added.