

Step up vaccination in Sabah, urge health experts

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KOTA KINABALU: Two Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) health specialists have called for the vaccination rate to be stepped up to prevent Sabah from becoming the 'next Klang Valley' in new Covid-19 infections.

Dr Kew Selh Teck and Dr Yusof Ibrahim opined that boosting the vaccination programme is key to bringing down the number of cases, which has record high figures.

Dr Kew, a consultant paediatrician at UMS' medicine and health sciences faculty, also said the intensive care units (ICUs) in the state's hospitals need to put up more beds, especially the Queen Elizabeth Hospital (QEH) in Kota Kinabalu.



Dr Kew Selh Teck

He said there are reports that open space like hospital corridors have been converted into Covid-19 wards.

He said QEH has been turned into a Covid-19 hospital due to the surge of infections, with its emergency and trauma department only accepting critical Covid-19 patients.

"We hope and pray that we don't end up like the Klang Valley," the Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) Sabah chairman told FMT.

"The key is vaccination. So far, that's the only proof that it could prevent people from getting the disease, even the Delta variant, or at least it will not be that severe.

"We don't want to reach a stage where we'll have no more ICU beds to take care of critical patients," he added.



Dr Yusof Ibrahim

Dr Yusof, UMS' senior public health medicine specialist and public health unit head, said Sabah is still the lowest in terms of vaccination coverage, but welcomed the state government's move to boost the immunisation exercise.

"If we can reach 80 per cent coverage by October, the cases will come down. We are also facing the Delta variant, which is more infectious and spreads faster.

"All of us are working hard to achieve this target. UMS is now open to the public and we are covering 3,000 people per day. We also have mobile teams reaching out to the rural areas," he said.

Sabah continued to record four-digit Covid-19 cases the past week, with 1,247 on Monday and 1,383 on Tuesday.

Covid-19 spokesperson Datuk Seri Masidi Manjun said the cases are expected to remain high until a significant percentage of population are fully vaccinated.