

CM: Sarawak set to fully vaccinate 12- to 17-year-olds by next month

KUCHING (Sept 8): Sarawak expects to fully vaccinate those aged between 12 and 17, who make up 10.3 per cent of the population, against Covid-19 by the fourth week of October, said Datuk Patinggi Abang Johari Tun Openg.

The Chief Minister said based on Department of Statistics Malaysia (DoSM) data for 2021, there are 96,400 in the State aged 16 to 17 (3.4 per cent), while those aged 12 to 15 make up 6.9 per cent of the population at 192,800.

"We urge parents to bring their children who are eligible for vaccination at the set vaccination centres (PPV) or health clinics involved in the vaccination drive, for their own protection.

"The system used is the same like the existing one, where the appointment is based on the school," he said when visiting a PPV at a health clinic in Telaga Air today.

A total of 379 students from SMK Sri Matang received their first dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine there.

The vaccination programme from today until the end of this week is for those aged 16 and 17, while vaccinations for those aged 12 to 15 will begin at the end of this month.

Sarawak is the first state to begin vaccinations for under-18s.

Those aged 16 to 17 are expected to be fully vaccinated by Oct 3, while those aged 12 to 15 should complete their vaccinations by the fourth week of October.

Abang Johari explained appointments will be made according to their schools, and each PPV will receive students from several schools each day.

Health clinics will also provide vaccinations to boarders who are still in their respective villages as well as to school dropouts.

In rural areas, those aged 12 to 17 will receive their jabs through outreach programmes by the Health Department's divisional offices.

The chief minister said this will mainly cover Kapit with 9,334 students from 16 schools and Miri with 207 students from two schools.

Meanwhile, Abang Johari said 89 per cent of eligible Sarawakians have completed their vaccinations, and once the under-18s receive both doses of the vaccine, the rate would rise further.

He added that in terms of the total Sarawak population, 65.1 per cent have completed their two doses.

“What’s left are those aged below 12 years old. For this, we wait for the opinion of the Health Ministry and guide by the WHO (World Health Organisation),” he said.

Among those present today were Deputy Chief Minister Datuk Amar Douglas Uggah Embas, who is State Disaster Management Committee chairman; Assistant Minister of Islamic Affairs and DBKU Datuk Dr Abdul Rahman Junaidi; and Sarawak Health director Datuk Dr Mohamed Sopian Mohamed.

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