

## **No free Covid-19 test for all, says Health DG**

**Malaysiakini**

**15 June 2020**

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CORONAVIRUS | Health Ministry director-general Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah clarified that the ministry only offers free Covid-19 testing for certain groups of people.

Groups that qualify for free testing include those who are patients under investigation (PUIs), those with severe acute respiratory illnesses (Sari), Malaysians returning from abroad and close contacts of positive Covid-19 cases, he said.

“If (individuals) come to our clinics for testing, we will not do it unless they fall under certain categories.

“If we open up (testing) for everyone, I think everyone will come to the ministry for testing.

“So we have our criteria for conducting the test. However, for individuals who are not under those criteria... they can take the test at private laboratories.

“We encourage them to do the test at private laboratories and not at the ministry’s laboratories,” he said.

On a separate matter, Noor Hisham advised the public to contact their district health office if they were suspicious of any individuals visiting their houses who claim to be Health Ministry officers.

This comes after a message and images that have gone viral on social media of an alleged scam in which individuals purporting to be Health Ministry officers arrived at a person’s home in a ministry van on the pretext of conducting door-to-door tests.

“The residents of the house have to be careful and wary. If they suspect or are unsure of any officers who come to their house, they can contact the district health office or the police,” he said.

Meanwhile, Noor Hisham said that Health Ministry staff have to wear their uniform and carry their authority cards with them when making house calls.

Health Ministry officers do make house calls in cases such as screening PUIs quarantined at home or to provide postnatal care for mothers and babies, he said.

Earlier, Defence Minister Ismail Sabri also said that health authorities do not conduct house-to-house Covid-19 swab tests with the exception of areas placed under enhanced movement control order (MCO).

He also said the ministry has since lodged a police report on the matter.

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Source: <https://www.malaysiakini.com/news/530347>