

Noor Hisham again pleads for help to fight Covid-19

Malaysiakini

12 October 2020

COVID-19 | Health Ministry director-general Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah has again pleaded for volunteers and NGOs to help fight Covid-19 in Sabah.

This came after some of the ministry's healthcare workers have become infected with Covid-19 while others had to be quarantined.

"The Health Ministry urges NGOs to get involved and come forward with aid for Sabah to help contain the spread of Covid-19," he said during his daily briefing today from his quarantine at home.

"The ministry also urges more medical volunteers to help the ministry tackle the third wave of Covid-19.

"The coordination will be done by the National Crisis Preparedness and Response Centre and those who are interested and are qualified can email mobilisasi19@gmail.com or cprc@moh.gov.my," he later added, in response to a

question.

To cope with the strain on personnel, he said the ministry has redeployed 522 people in various service categories to Tawau, Lahad Datu, Semporna and Kota Kinabalu; whether internally in Sabah or from other states.

Another 11 healthcare specialists will also be deployed to Sabah soon, he said.

Noor Hisham also revealed the extent that the need for more testing has strained its laboratories in Sabah.

According to a chart shown during his briefing, Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Kota Kinabalu has a rated maximum capacity of 400 tests per day, but it managed to perform 471 tests yesterday which is 118 percent of its capacity.

However, this pales in comparison to the 890 samples received that day and the backlog of 1,200 tests in total.

Likewise, the Kota Kinabalu Public Health Laboratory has the rated capacity for 2,000 tests per day and managed to perform 2,828 tests yesterday, which is 141 percent of its capacity.

In comparison, it had received 1,966 samples yesterday and has a backlog of 2,023 tests.

Strangely, University Malaysia Sabah's capacity of 100 test a day appears to be unused, and no mention was given on the university laboratory's situation.

Meanwhile, Noor Hisham said the Health Ministry has taken steps to address the shortage of testing capacity in Sabah.

"The Health Ministry has increased the laboratory capacity throughout Sabah, in addition to working with private laboratories, and bringing 2,233 excess samples to Peninsular Malaysia for processing," he said.

Nationwide, Malaysia has performed 15,558 reverse transcription-polymerase chain reaction tests for Covid-19, out of a capacity of 41,254 tests per day.

As for hospital beds, Noor Hisham revealed that eight hospitals in Sabah have been designated as Covid-19 hospitals, in addition to 17 low-risk quarantine and treatment centres.

The hospitals have 978 beds designated for Covid-19 patients, of which 71 percent have been used. The low-risk quarantine and treatment centres,

meanwhile, have used up 22 percent of its capacity.

On average, between the two facilities, only 32 percent of available beds have been used.

Meanwhile, 58 percent of intensive care unit beds available for severely ill Covid-19 patients have been used, along with 38 percent of the 180 ventilators available.

Noor Hisham reiterated the steps taken by the ministry to ensure there are sufficient beds for Covid-19 patients in Sabah, such as working with the Malaysian Armed Forces to set up a field hospital in Semporna, and intensifying contact tracing to ensure patients are treated early.

It is also increasing the number of ventilators as well as anesthesiologists. the latter of whom is needed to keep patients on ventilators sedated.

Asked about the supply of personal protective equipment, Noor Hisham said advance planning has paid off.

He said there are 19 categories of PPE, and on average, government hospitals nationwide have enough supply to last two to three months.

“Areas that experience shortage will be detected early and additional stocks will be sent immediately,” he said.

In addition, he said approval has been given for the emergency procurement of PPE in Sabah, which will further bolster supplies.

Copyright © 1999-2012 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd

Source: <https://www.malysiakini.com/news/546269>