AKHBAR : BERITA HARIAN
MUKA SURAT : 2
RUANGAN : NASIONAL

Bajet 2023 diharap selesai isu pekerja sektor kesihatan

Kuala Lumpur: Persatuan Perubatan Malaysia (MMA) berharap peruntukan yang mencukupi kepada Kementerian Kesihatan pada Bajet 2023 bagi menyelesaikan isu tenaga kerja dalam sektor berkenaan.

Presiden MMA, Dr Koh Kar Chai, berkata pihaknya berharap pertambahan peruntukan itu mencukupi dalam usaha menyelesaikan isu tenaga kerja yang amat meruncing ketika ini, jika kerajaan berhasrat membawa perubahan bagi reformasi sistem kesihatan sedia ada.

Katanya, tidak dinafikan pembinaan infrastruktur juga sama penting, namun dalam keadaan sekarang, isu tenaga kerja perlu diberi perhatian untuk diselesaikan terlebih dahulu.

"Kemudahan kesihatan memerlukan jangka masa panjang untuk dibina dan disiapkan.

"Begitu juga untuk membina tenaga kerja cekap yang berada pada kedudukan yang baik untuk menghadapi cabaran penjagaan kesihatan dalam masa terdekat, sama ada doktor, jururawat, ahli farmasi dan kakitangan kesihatan bersekutu yang lain," katanya dalam kenyataan semalam.

Dr Kar Chai berkata, ketika ini pihaknya mempunyai jumlah doktor yang mencukupi namun memerlukan masa yang panjang untuk menjadikan mereka tenaga kerja mahir.

Oleh itu katanya, dengan adanya kenaikan belanjawan tahunan, ia bukan sahaja membabitkan pembinaan infrastruktur tetapi juga penyerapan tenaga kerja tambahan ke dalam perkhidmatan serta keperluan untuk melatih mereka.

KKM teroka potensi ketum, kanabis dalam perubatan

Rangka strategi kawal selia, penguatkuasaan penggunaan pada lawatan bilateral ke Bangkok

Oleh Nas Norziela Nasbah
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Kuala Lumpur: Menteri Kesihatan, Khairy Jamaluddin akan mengetuai delegasi Kementerian Kesihatan (KKM) untuk meneroka potensi penggunaan kanabis dan ketum dalam bidang perubatan serta merangka strategi kawal selia dan penguatkuasaan undang-undang terhadap penggunaannya.

Khairy berkata lawatan kerja bilateral kesihatan ke Bangkok, Thailand itu akan menjadi platform terbaik kementerian untuk pendedahan dan penelitian berhubung kajian antarabangsa berkaitan kanabis/ketum termasuk hasil dapatan ujian klinikal kanabis bagi tujuan kesihatan.

Katanya, Thailand adalah negara pertama di Asia Tenggara yang memberi kelonggaran undang-undang dan membenarkan kanabis digunakan dalam perubatan.

"Lawatan ini juga membuka peluang kolaborasi peringkat antarabangsa untuk mana-mana entiti swasta dan penyelidikan menjalankan kajian dan ujian ke atas kanabis serta ketum seterusnya membangunkan inovasi perubatan.

Khairy tiba di Thailand untuk memulakan lawatan kerja bilateral kesihatan bermula semalam sehingga esok sebelum menghadiri Mesyuarat Peringkat Tertinggi Kesihatan dan Ekonomi APEC pada 25 Ogos.

"Ia juga sekali gus meningkatkan kualiti penjagaan kesihatan dalam negara," katanya semalam.

Taklimat dasar kanabis

Khairy mengetuai delegasi Malaysia bagi memenuhi jemputan Menteri Kesihatan Awam Thailand, Anutin Charnvirakul sebelum menghadiri Mesyuarat Peringkat Tertinggi Kesihatan dan Ekonomi dengan kerjasama Ekonomi Asia Pasifik (APEC) di Bangkok pada Rabu ini.

Lawatan kerja yang disertai pegawai kanan kementerian turut membawa delegasi ke Pejabat Farmaseutikal Kerajaan (GPO) untuk diberikan taklimat mengenai dasar kanabis di negara itu termasuklah amalan, kaedah penanaman, kajian serta penggunaan kanabis/ketum bagi tujuan kesihatan di Thailand.

> Lawatan ini juga membuka peluang kolaborasi peringkat antarabangsa untuk mana-mana entiti swasta dan penyelidikan menjalankan kajian dan ujian ke atas kanabis serta ketum
>
> *Khairy Jamaluddin, Menteri Kesihatan*

Pada 14 Julai lalu, Khairy mengumumkan kerangka pendaftaran produk cannabidiol (CBD) yang membolehkan bahan aktif yang terkandung dalam pokok kanabis selepas ini boleh digunakan secara bersyarat menerusi preskripsi yang boleh diperoleh daripada doktor terlebih dahulu pada tahun depan.

Dalam kerangka kerja pendaftaran produk CBD itu nanti, ia menggariskan pelbagai perkara yang perlu diberi perhatian antaranya membabitkan aspek keselamatan, keberkesanan dan pendidikan.

92 peratus kes tertunggak di hospital kerajaan selesai

Kuala Lumpur: Kementerian Kesihatan (KKM) menyelesaikan 92 peratus daripada 57,355 kes tertunggak yang dilaporkan di hospital kerajaan pada September 2021.

Menterinya, Khairy Jamaluddin, berkata ia membabitkan 53,785 kes berkaitan prosedur pembedahan dan 3,570 kes berkaitan prosedur bukan pembedahan.

Beliau berkata, kes prosedur pembedahan meliputi pembedahan am, pembedahan neuro, pembedahan paediatrik, pembedahan plastik dan rekonstruktif, pembedahan kardiotorasik, pembedahan vaskular, urologi, ginekologi, ortopedik, oftalmologi dan otorinolaringologi.

Kes prosedur bukan pembedahan pula, katanya, termasuklah ujian tidur, ujian fungsi paru-paru, prosedur sel stem, radioterapi dan simulasi topografi berkomputer (CT) serta angiografi koronari.

Laksana beberapa inisiatif

"Usaha menangani kes tertunggak itu dilakukan dengan beberapa inisiatif KKM termasuk penyumberluaran pesakit KKM ke hospital swasta dan pembukaan semula dewan bedah elektif di hospital KKM secara berperingkat bermula pada Oktober 2021.

"Inisiatif pembedahan elektif Sabtu antara jam 8 pagi hingga 5 petang di hospital berpakar di seluruh negara bermula pada Disember 2021 serta melaksanakan pembedahan secara besar-besaran.

"Ia termasuklah Inisiatif Pembedahan Urologi Berskala Besar (MUSI) di Hospital Selayang pada Februari lalu; Inisiatif Pembedahan Katarak Berskala Besar di Hospital Tawau pada Mac dan Inisiatif Karnival Pembedahan Tawau di Hospital Tawau pada Jun lalu," katanya dalam kenyataan di sini, semalam.

Khairy berkata, menerusi pendekatan inisiatif berkenaan, sehingga 31 Julai lalu, sebanyak 52,522 prosedur bagi kes tertunggak dapat dilaksanakan iaitu membabitkan 48,952 kes berkaitan prosedur pembedahan dan 3,570 kes berkaitan prosedur bukan pembedahan.

"Ini bermakna, 92 peratus daripada jumlah kes tertunggak yang dicatatkan pada September tahun lalu berjaya diselesaikan.

"Bagaimanapun, jumlah kes yang masih tertunggak sehingga 31 Julai adalah sebanyak 4,833 kes dan hanya membabitkan prosedur pembedahan daripada disiplin pembedahan paediatrik dan pembedahan kardiotorasik," katanya.

Beliau berkata, KKM akan terus berusaha mempertingkatkan perkhidmatan kesihatan kepada seluruh Keluarga Malaysia dan komited menyelesaikan baki 4,833 kes yang masih tertunggak dalam tempoh terdekat.

Jelas beliau, pandemik COVID-19 memberi impak terhadap sistem dan perkhidmatan kesihatan di seluruh negara dengan menyaksikan kes bukan COVID-19 terutamanya kes pembedahan elektif turut terkesan dan terpaksa ditunda semasa kemuncak pandemik.

AKHBAR : BERITA HARIAN
MUKA SURAT : 18
RUANGAN : NASIONAL

Indikator COVID-19 dalam negara tunjukkan penurunan

Putrajaya: Kebanyakan indikator COVID-19 di negara ini mula menunjukkan penurunan pada Minggu Epidemiologi (ME) 33/2022 atau dalam tempoh 14 Ogos hingga Sabtu lalu.

Ketua Pengarah Kesihatan, Tan Sri Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah, berkata secara keseluruhannya jumlah kemasukan pesakit COVID-19 di negara ini membabitkan kategori satu dan dua menurun sebanyak lima peratus berbanding minggu sebelumnya.

Bagi pesakit COVID-19 kategori tiga hingga lima pula, katanya, ia menunjukkan penurunan sebanyak 15.4 peratus.

"Bilangan kes baharu bagi ME 33/2022 menurun sebanyak 14.5 peratus iaitu daripada 26,678 kes kepada 22,282 kes.

"Bagi jumlah kes tempatan pula, ia menurun 0.7 peratus (daripada 26,656 kes kepada 26,458 kes), manakala bilangan kes import meningkat 36.4 peratus (daripada 22 kes kepada 30 kes).

"Untuk kematian pula, bilangan kes menurun 8.3 peratus (daripada 60 kes kepada 55 kes) dengan purata kes aktif setiap hari bagi ME 33/2022 adalah 42,010 iaitu menurun 6.0 peratus berbanding minggu sebelumnya," katanya dalam kenyataan, semalam.

Mengulas jumlah kes sembuh pula, beliau berkata, ia menurun 8.5 peratus atau daripada 28,905 kes pada minggu lalu kepada 26,458 kes minggu ini.

Berhubung pengisian katil bagi fasiliti kesihatan COVID-19, Dr Noor Hisham berkata penggunaan katil bukan kritikal menurun satu peratus, manakala katil di Unit Rawatan Rapi (ICU) menunjukkan sedikit peningkatan iaitu lima peratus.

"Selain itu, bagi penggunaan katil di Pusat Rawatan COVID-19 Berisiko Rendah (PKRC), tiada perubahan berbanding ME sebelumnya. Peratusan pesakit COVID-19 memerlukan alat bantuan pernafasan (ABP) pula meningkat 0.3 peratus," katanya.

Penurunan turut dapat dilihat bagi kes positif COVID-19 yang dipantau oleh Pusat Penilaian COVID-19 (CAC) di seluruh negara.

"Bilangan kedatangan pesakit ke CAC menurun sebanyak 5.4 peratus, bilangan kes COVID-19 baharu yang menjalani pemantauan di rumah menurun sebanyak 9.9 peratus dan bilangan kes COVID-19 yang dirujuk CAC ke hospital menurun sebanyak 21.3 peratus.

"Untuk trend kes aktif harian COVID-19 yang dipantau secara maya (CAC Maya), pada akhir ME 33/2022 ia turun 16.3 peratus berbanding pada akhir ME 32/2022 (dari 62,516 kes kepada 52,326 kes)," katanya.

AKHBAR : HARIAN METRO
MUKA SURAT : 5
RUANGAN : LOKAL

Sembilan kematian akibat Covid-19 direkod kelmarin

Putrajaya: Kes baharu Covid-19 kembali berada di bawah 3,000 kes apabila sebanyak 2,464 kes dilaporkan kelmarin.

Menerusi data yang dikongsikan dalam laman sesawang Covidnow, kes baharu itu membabitkan 2,448 kes penularan tempatan dengan 16 lagi adalah kes import yang mendapat jangkitan dari luar negara.

Pertambahan kes berkenaan menjadikan sehingga kini masih terdapat 38,918 kes aktif dengan kebolehjangkitan Covid-19. Daripada jumlah yang dinyatakan itu, sebanyak 37,408 kes atau 96.1 peratus kini sedang menjalani kuarantin wajib di rumah.

33 pesakit Covid-19 memerlukan alat bantuan pernafasan

Selain itu, sejumlah 3.6 peratus bersamaan 1,409 pesakit pula mendapatkan rawatan lanjut di hospital, Pusat Kuarantin dan Rawatan Covid-19 (PKRC) (32) dan Unit Rawatan Rapi (ICU) (69) dengan 33 pesakit memerlukan alat bantuan pernafasan.

Secara keseluruhannya, penggunaan ICU di seluruh negara kini mencecah 60.8 peratus dengan 18.5 peratus membabitkan pesakit Covid-19.

Setakat kelmarin, terdapat sembilan kes kematian dicatatkan menjadikan jumlah keseluruhan angka korban di negara ini meningkat kepada 36,145 kes.

Dalam pada itu, sebanyak 4,427 kes sembuh dicatatkan kelmarin ia sekaligus menjadikan jumlah kes pulih sepenuhnya daripada jangkitan berkenaan kini adalah 4,682,689 kes.

AKHBAR : KOSMO
MUKA SURAT : 5
RUANGAN : NEGARA

Turut dijadual bertemu pemain industri ketum

KJ ke Thailand kaji dasar guna kanabis

Oleh MOHD. HUSNI MOHD. NOOR

PUTRAJAYA – Lawatan kerja Menteri Kesihatan, Khairy Jamaluddin Abu Bakar ke Thailand bermula semalam antara lain bagi melihat sendiri dasar penggunaan kanabis yang dilaksanakan negara berkenaan.

Ketika berada di sana, Khairy Jamaludin akan membuat lawatan ke Pejabat Farmaseutikal Kerajaan (GPO) selain diberi taklimat mengenai amalan, kaedah penanaman, kajian serta penggunaan kanabis dan ketum bagi tujuan kesihatan di Thailand.

THAILAND negara pertama Asia Tenggara memberi kelonggaran undang-undang membenarkan kanabis dijual secara terbuka.

Kementerian Kesihatan (KKM) menerusi kenyataan akhbar berkata, Khairy Jamaluddin berada di Thailand sempena lawatan kerja tiga hari bagi memenuhi jemputan Timbalan Perdana Menteri Thailand merangkap Menteri Kesihatan Awam, Anutin Charnvirakul.

Menurutnya, Khairy Jamaluddin juga dijadual menghadiri Mesyuarat Peringkat Tertinggi Kesihatan dan Ekonomi (High Level Meeting on Health and Economy HLMHE) Kerjasama Ekonomi Asia Pasifik (APEC) di Bangkok pada 25 Ogos ini.

"Dalam rangka lawatan kerja rasmi itu, beliau dijangka mengadakan pertemuan dengan pemain penting dalam industri kanabis dan ketum di Thailand selain mengunjungi Siam Cannabis Land, di mana beliau akan melihat kaedah penanaman di dalam dan luar premis, rumah hijau dan bilik pengeringan.

"Selain itu, beliau dan delegasi akan membuat lawatan ke Bumrungrad International Hospital, iaitu antara hospital swasta terbesar di Asia Tenggara dan juga Institut Psikiatri Somdet Chaopraya bagi melihat perkhidmatan kesihatan mental dan kaedah rawatan yang diberikan kepada pesakit," katanya.

Ujarnya, menerusi lawatan sama, KKM juga berpeluang meneroka potensi penggunaan kanabis dan ketum dalam bidang kesihatan serta merangka strategi kawal selia dan penguatkuasaan undang-undang terhadap penggunaannya.

Jelasnya lagi, Thailand adalah negara pertama di Asia Tenggara yang memberi kelonggaran undang-undang dan membenarkan kanabis untuk digunakan bagi tujuan perubatan.

MINUMAN ekstrak ganja yang dijual terbuka di Thailand.

AKHBAR : SINAR HARIAN
MUKA SURAT : 13
RUANGAN : NASIONAL

4,833 kes rawatan tertunggak bukan Covid-19 diselesaikan dalam masa terdekat

PUTRAJAYA - Kementerian Kesihatan (KKM) akan menyelesaikan baki 4,833 kes rawatan tertunggak bukan Covid-19 di hospital kerajaan dalam masa terdekat, kata Menteri Kesihatan, Khairy Jamaluddin Abu Bakar.

Beliau berkata, jumlah kes yang masih tertunggak sehingga 31 Julai lepas itu hanya melibatkan prosedur pembedahan daripada disiplin pembedahan pediatrik dan pembedahan kardiotorasik.

"KKM akan terus berusaha meningkatkan perkhidmatan kesihatan kepada seluruh Keluarga Malaysia," katanya dalam kenyataan pada Isnin.

Menteri Kesihatan itu pada Ahad berkata, KKM berjaya menyelesaikan kes rawatan tertunggak bukan Covid-19 di hospital kerajaan di seluruh negara sebanyak 92 peratus setakat ini daripada jumlah 57,355 kes dilaporkan pada September lepas.

Mengulas lanjut kes tertunggak direkodkan pada 30 September lepas, Khairy berkata, 53,785 kes adalah berkaitan prosedur pembedahan dan 3,570 kes berkaitan prosedur bukan pembedahan (*medical-based*).

"Kes *surgical-based* meliputi pembedahan am, pembedahan neuro, pembedahan pediatrik, pembedahan plastik dan rekonstruktif, pembedahan kardiotorasik, pembedahan vaskular, urologi, ginekologi, ortopedik, oftalmologi dan otorinolaringologi, manakala kes medical-based termasuklah *sleep study, lung function test, stem cell procedure, radiotherapy* dan *CT simulation* serta *coronary angiography*," katanya.

Khairy berkata, antara inisiatif yang telah dilaksanakan KKM bagi menangani kes-kes tertunggak adalah melalui penyumberluaran pesakit KKM ke hospital swasta.

Turut dilakukan adalah pembukaan semula dewan-dewan bedah elektif di hospital KKM secara berperingkat bermula pada Oktober tahun lepas dan pembedahan elektif hari Sabtu dari jam 8 pagi hingga 5 petang di hospital-hospital pakar di seluruh negara bermula Disember tahun lepas. - *Bernama*

AKHBAR : NEW STRAITS TIMES
MUKA SURAT : 2
RUANGAN : NEWS/NATION

4,833 CASES STILL PENDING

92pc of backlogged surgical, medical cases cleared

KUALA LUMPUR: The Health Ministry has cleared 92 per cent of surgical and medical procedures, which have been pending since last year.

Its minister, Khairy Jamaluddin, said up to September last year, there were 57,355 pending cases at government hospitals, including 53,785 surgical-based and 3,570 medical-based cases.

Fast forward to July 31 this year, he said that 52,522 of the pending cases had been completed, which comprised 48,952 surgical cases and 3,570 medical cases.

"Thus, the number of cases still pending until July 31 this year stands at 4,833 cases and only involve surgical procedures in paediatric and cardiothoracic surgery.

"The ministry will continue to strive to improve health services for all Keluarga Malaysia and is committed to resolving the remaining 4,833 pending cases soon," he said yesterday.

With over 50,000 pending procedures in government hospitals, the government had announced various initiatives to reduce the backlog of cases.

AKHBAR : THE STAR

MUKA SURAT : 5

RUANGAN : NATION

In dire need of vital meds

Doctors opt for drug substitutes due to critical shortage

Reports by FAZLEENA AZIZ
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PETALING JAYA: Many private clinics are experiencing difficulties getting preferred medications – especially syrup for children – to treat their patients due to a shortage of medicines, prompting some to call on the National Pharmaceutical Regulatory Authority (NPRA) to ease restrictions to allow more supplies to come in.

Federation of Private Medical Practitioners' Associations Malaysia secretary Dr Shanmuganathan Ganeson said there is a critical shortage of syrup medicines, in particular.

Other formulations in tablet form are also lacking, and packaging requirements and freight container demand are adding to delays, he said.

Because of these factors, Dr Shanmuganathan feels that it is vital for NPRA to quickly come up with urgent interim measures such as allowing loose packing of medicines.

"In this way, obstacles like stringent packaging requirements can be overcome. For example, blister packing can be deferred and loose packing allowed until the situation improves.

"So if the active pharmaceutical ingredient is available, the suppliers should be allowed to innovate rapid delivery of essential medicines.

"Right now, syrup medicines, including cough mixtures, most paediatric medicines, including antibiotics, and antipyretics, are most needed," he told *The Star*.

He also said since the announcement of the medicine stockpile released by the government to overcome the shortage, no one has reached out to general practitioners (GPs) yet.

Dr Shanmuganathan noted that Pharmaniaga Logistics is the government-appointed agent dealing with the matter, adding that private hospitals may have received medicines from the government stockpile, but clinics have not.

"Sick children are most vulnerable and some GPs have asked parents to crush the tablets and turn them into liquid form to enable children to ingest them easily, though this method is not advisable.

"Paediatricians are the worst-affected. They are probably innovating for the sake of their patients while awaiting announcements (to get the medicines)," he said, adding that the situation is worse in rural areas with fewer distributors.

Dr Shanmuganathan said the situation has been made worse by pharmaceutical distributors finding it more manageable to do bulk sales than to supply thousands of clinics all over the country.

"Current supplies may suffice for about two to three weeks," he added.

Medical Practitioners Coalition Association of Malaysia president Dr Raj Kumar Maharajah said the situation is "at a breaking point".

He said that following the government's recent announcement of the medicine stockpile release, the progress has been slow and some doctors are reluctant to deal with the tedious red tape involved.

"The children's syrup, including antibiotics, is in acute shortage. Most of the companies don't have the specific syrup antibiotics we want, and they only give us what they have. We have no choice but to prescribe the ones used for all cases," he said.

He conceded that there were cases of doctors prescribing tablets that had to be crushed.

"But the efficacy of the medication is reduced, so we can't determine the intended outcome.

"The government pharmacy regulators are very stringent about how and where we store the medicines, and whether they are in the foil or have serial numbers but now, we have no choice but to make do with crushing tablets," he said.

Dr Raj Kumar urged that NPRA allow the import of medicines from countries, especially those with ready stocks of syrup, instead of sticking to strict standard operating procedure.

For now, the private clinics are getting only paracetamol from the stockpile, he said.

"They have to apply online to the Klinik Kesihatan or directly to Pharmaniaga. If the stock is available, they will receive it within two days," he added.

In June, *The Star* reported that a spike in the number of cases for Covid-19 and influenza as well as hand, foot and mouth disease had compounded the problem of medicine shortage in the country. Over-the-counter medicines such as paracetamol, cough syrup and lozenges for sore throat were in short supply.

On July 15, Health Minister Khairy Jamaluddin announced that the ministry would release its federal medical stockpile to address the shortage, especially that faced by private clinics, private hospitals and community pharmacies.

Khairy attributed the medicine shortage to exceeding demand this year due to the influenza-like illnesses and supply issues caused by lockdown policies in China and the Russia-Ukraine war.

Doctors: We have to make do with limited meds supply

PETALING JAYA: Amid the shortage of medicines, doctors at private clinics are making the best of the situation by taking the next available option in treating their patients.

Most of these doctors get their medicines from dedicated suppliers. Some are unaware of how to get them from the federal stockpile that the Health Ministry released recently to help ease the situation.

Dr Jeya Retnam, who runs a private clinic in Ipoh, said he currently makes do with the medications provided by local pharmacies.

"Many regular medications are unavailable, so I make do with substitutions. But I am not happy that I can't prescribe the ones that I used to give out," he said, adding that in his experience, those were the ones that had proven to be effective.

He, too, is not entirely familiar with the process of obtaining medicines from the government stockpile that was recently released.

Datuk Dr Jeremiah James, from Kota Kinabalu, said his clinic has only been getting medicines from private pharmacies so far.

"We cope with whatever the private pharmacies have. We don't know the procedures to get the medicines from the government, and we don't know what medicines the government has available for us GPs (general practitioners).

"We don't even know where to get the relevant information, and we need to know the cost as well," he said.

Dr Jaya Prakash said his clinic in Klang depends on the usual distributors but found that children's medicines were the hardest to get. Stock was limited to allow for a greater supply reach among GPs.

Another doctor in Kuala Lumpur who declined to be named said it was a long wait for the medicines from the stockpile.

She said it was likely that franchised clinics which operated on a bigger scale got precedence over standalone ones.

"We are still waiting and don't know when we will get the medicines. Right now, we rely on local pharmacies for our supply.

"The most severe shortage is in syrup for children. So I can only prescribe tablets which have to be crushed and given to the patients in liquid form.

"We don't have a choice," she added.

Preferred meds sold out, but options available

PETALING JAYA: It's not a situation of "no medicines available" but that the preferred brands of doctors and pharmacies are out of stock, says the Malaysian Association of Pharmaceutical Suppliers (MAPS).

Its executive director Dr Choe Tong Seng said there are other brands that can be used instead.

"Doctors can also prescribe other pharmacological/ therapeutic alternatives to replace the treatments prescribed, but a lot more work is needed even in sourcing for supplies.

"The Health Ministry through the Pharmacy Services Programme has had frequent engagements with stakeholders since the issue of shortage of medicines was raised.

"And the ministry has put in place a safety and early alert mechanism alongside local manufacturers and importers, to deal with any potential disruption in medicine supplies," he said.

MAPS, which represents importers of generic medicines, has been actively engaged with the ministry, he added.

Dr Choe reiterated that the "drug shortage" issue is not confined to Malaysia but was a global challenge.

Running on empty: Pharmacy supervisor Nur Amirah Shukri showing an almost empty shelf of cough syrups in Seri Kembangan, Selangor. — AZHAR MAHFOF/The Star

"I believe the suppliers are doing their utmost to meet the demand, but a lot more work is needed in sourcing and distributing," he said, adding that the challenges included conflicts – such as the Russia-Ukraine war – and the availability of raw materials.

He also warned that it was important to not buy medicines from sources that were not registered with the Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) system because the quality, safety and efficacy of such products may be compromised.

He added that MAPS members source their products from leading GMP factories globally and they are already working with their partners to increase supplies.

"Even in a crisis, we should ensure that no poor or sub-standard products are brought into the country," he said.

Malaysian Pharmacists Society (MPS) president Amrahi Buang suggested general practitioners give the prescriptions to patients, allowing them to get medicines from the nearest community pharmacies.

He said the current situation provides a great collaboration between clinics and pharmacies.

He also said MPS has informed community pharmacists to get their supplies from the federal stockpile if need be, but "so far it has been quiet".

"As far as we know, only private clinics are affected," he said.

On doctors having to give crushed tablets or what is called simple compounding, Amrahi said only pharmacists are trained to do this.

"I'm not sure how the doctors are doing it. They may have to work with the community pharmacists to prepare these.

"The issue is in the stability of the preparations. Final preparation must be labelled as such with expiry date mentioned.

"You need the appropriate medium to do this. It will be best to get patients to the community pharmacists to get it done appropriately," he said.

MAPS' Dr Choe also said if the medicine concerned is supposed to be dispensed via a "sustained release", it should not be crushed.

"Crushing a plain tablet should be on an ad hoc basis when the patient is ready to take their medicine immediately," he added.

KJ on fact-finding visit to Thailand to assess medical use of cannabis

PETALING JAYA: Health Minister Khairy Jamaluddin is on a four-day working visit to Thailand to assess the potential use of cannabis and ketum for medical purposes and the legal framework for its medical use.

The Health Ministry said the working visit, which started yesterday (Monday), was at the invitation of Thailand's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Public Health, Anutin Charnvirakul.

Khairy visited the Government Pharmaceutical Office (GPO), where he will be briefed about the medical cannabis policy in Thailand, including the practices, cultivation methods and research and the use of cannabis and ketum for health purposes in Thailand.

Thailand is the first country in South-East Asia to legalise cannabis and use it for medicinal purposes.

"The bilateral visit represents an ideal platform for the health ministry to understand the advances in international research and findings to support the clinical use of cannabis."

According to the statement, the visit also opens international collaboration opportunities for the private and research entities undertaking clinical studies on cannabis and ketum as they develop medical innovations that will further improve the quality of healthcare in Malaysia.

Khairy is expected to meet the main players of the cannabis and ketum industry in Thailand besides visiting Siam Cannabis Land, where he will be able to see both indoor and outdoor plantations, a greenhouse, and a drying centre.

The Malaysian delegation will also visit Bumrungrad International Hospital, one of the largest private hospitals in South-East Asia, and the Somdet Chaopraya Institute of Psychiatry, which provides modern mental healthcare services.

Last month, Khairy said a framework for registering certain cannabidiol (CBD) products would be announced.

Khairy is also scheduled to attend the Apec High-level meeting on health and economy in Bangkok on Thursday before returning to Kuala Lumpur.

Meanwhile, on a separate issue, Khairy said in a statement that the ministry would settle the remaining 4,833 cases of non-Covid-19 backlogs at government hospitals soon.

He said the backlog cases as of July 31 only involved surgical procedures from the disciplines of paediatric and cardiothoracic surgery.

"MOH will continue to strive to improve health services for all Malaysian families."

Yesterday, Khairy said the MOH had successfully resolved 92% of the 57,355 backlogs of non-Covid-19 treatment cases recorded at the government hospitals across the country up to September 2021.

Of the total backlog cases, he said 53,785 cases were surgical-based, and 3,570 were medical-based cases. — Bernama

AKHBAR : THE SUN
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RUANGAN : NEWS WITHOUT BORDERS

New Covid-19 cases down by 14.5%

KUALA LUMPUR: The number of new Covid-19 cases dropped by 14.5% to 22,822 during the 33rd epidemiology week (EW33) from Aug 14 to 20.

Health Director-General Tan Sri Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah said during the same period, 55 deaths were recorded, down by 8.3% from the previous week.

The number of recovered cases has also dropped by 8.5% to 26,458 from 28,905, Bernama reported.

"The average number of active daily cases during week 33 was 42,010, down by 6% from the previous week."

The admission of categories 1 and 2 patients to public hospitals and low-risk Covid-19 quarantine and treatment centres dropped by 5% per 100,000 from the preceding week, while categories 3, 4 and 5 patients decreased by 15.4%.

AKHBAR : THE SUN

MUKA SURAT : 4

RUANGAN : NEWS WITHOUT BORDERS

Khairy in Thailand to assess cannabis potential

BANGKOK: Health Minister Khairy Jamaluddin is on a four-day working visit to Thailand to assess the potential use of cannabis and ketum for medical purposes, and the legal framework for their medical use.

The Health Ministry said the working visit, which started yesterday, was at the invitation of Thailand's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Public Health Anutin Charnvirakul.

Khairy is scheduled to visit the Government Pharmaceutical Office, where he will be briefed about the medical cannabis policy in Thailand, including practices, cultivation methods and research, and use of cannabis and ketum for health purposes.

Thailand is the first country in Southeast Asia to legalise cannabis and use it for medicinal purposes.

"The visit represents an ideal platform for the Health Ministry to understand the advances in international research and findings to support the clinical use of cannabis."

According to the ministry, the visit also opens international collaboration opportunities for private and research entities undertaking clinical studies on cannabis and ketum, as they develop medical innovations that will further improve the quality of healthcare in Malaysia.

Khairy is expected to meet the main players of the cannabis and ketum industry in Thailand, besides visiting Siam Cannabis Land, where he will be able to see both indoor and outdoor plantations, a greenhouse as well as a drying centre.

The Malaysian delegation will also visit Bumrungrad International Hospital, which is one of the largest private hospitals in Southeast Asia.

Also on their itinerary is the Somdet Chaopraya Institute of Psychiatry, which provides modern mental healthcare services.

Last month, Khairy said a framework regarding the registration of certain cannabidiol products would be announced.

The ministry said Khairy is also scheduled to attend the Apec high-level meeting on health and economy here on Thursday, before returning to Kuala Lumpur. – Bernama