



**AVOIDING PPV CLUSTER:** People queueing up outside the Rumah Prihatin Grand Seasons Hotel vaccination centre (PPV) in Kuala Lumpur yesterday since 7am. A majority of the crowd were foreign workers, but Rumah Prihatin's proximity to the Chow Kit area also sees many elderly, homeless people, the disabled, transgenders and hawkers walking in for vaccination. In response to the scene, Deputy Prime Minister Ismail Sabri Yaakob hopes authorities can prevent such situations from reoccurring.

## Home quarantine not the best idea

by NUR HANANI AZMAN

**HEALTH** experts believe that home quarantine is not the right option at the moment, especially as the country is dealing with multiple variants of concern (VOCs).

Pantai Hospital Kuala Lumpur consultant pulmonologist Dr Helmy Haja Mydin said there is no mechanism to ensure home quarantine compliance.

"As with all policy interventions, the proof is in the pudding. For example, we only need one or two cases to abscond and we will be dealing with yet another cluster.

"At this point in time, I suggest the quarantine order to be carried out like before even for individuals who have been vaccinated," he told *The Malaysian Reserve* (TMR).

On Aug 8, the government approved travelling and home quarantine for both Malaysians and permanent residents who have completed their vaccination.

Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin said this applied nationwide and regardless of the National Recovery Plan phase.

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"Fully vaccinated Malaysian travellers and non-Malaysians who have residences in Malaysia, including permanent residents and Malaysia My Second Home participants arriving from overseas, can undergo mandatory quarantine at home and will be given the digital Home Surveillance Order (HSO)," he announced.

Galen Centre for Health and Social Policy CEO Azrul Mohd Khalib said home quarantine presents specific challenges which involve interaction and possible exposure to others in the house-

hold, including loved ones and vulnerable individuals such as the elderly, immunocompromised or those not vaccinated.

He said this could put the person under quarantine at risk of infecting others or being infected themselves from others who might be asymptomatic within the home.

"It is of utmost importance that they adhere strictly to protocols for home quarantine and resist the temptation to bend or break the rules, as this would put at risk both the individual as well as the surrounding community.

"Quarantine in a dedicated faci-

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lity, hotel or home, for a specified amount of time, usually between 14 and 21 days, should be sufficient to ascertain whether a traveller is infected, experiencing mild symptoms and is able to recover on their own without hospitalisation. This would apply for all variants," he told TMR.

Meanwhile, Universiti Putra Malaysia epidemiologist and biostatistician Associate Professor Dr Malina Osman said if those who have been instructed to undergo HSO can genuinely oblige to all rules, there should not be a problem.

"However, past experiences have

proven that adherence was very challenging. Self-adherence is a must.

"Moreover, the person may have to go out if he or she is the one who takes care of the family. If there is no support from immediate family or friends, it would be very difficult," she told TMR.

She hoped that the relevant agencies can review the decision or revert to the previous decision where international travellers need to be quarantined at certain centres, in view of the presence of VOCs and as the active Covid-19 cases in Malaysia are still very high.

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