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20<sup>th</sup> March 2020

YB Datuk Alexander Nanta Linggi  
Minister of Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs  
No. 13, Persiaran Perdana, Presint 2,  
62623 Putrajaya,

YB Datuk Alexander

### **FACEMASKS AND HAND SANITISERS FOR FRONT-LINERS COMMUNITY PHARMACISTS**

Greetings from the Malaysian Pharmaceutical Society (MPS). We are the national professional association for all pharmacists in this country be it in the private sector or the government sector.

We are writing to emphasize to YB over the crisis of out-of-stock situation of face-masks and hand sanitizers being faced by private sector front line Pharmacist as well as the *rakyat*.

There is an urgent and crucial need to protect the front-line Pharmacist who are carrying out their duties.

Community Pharmacists, are one of the most accessible health care providers and they are at high risk as asymptomatic patients going to pharmacies may unknowingly transmit the Covid19 virus to unsuspecting Community Pharmacists who do not have proper PPE's as they are out of stock nationwide.

We urge the Ministry to take immediate measures so that stocks of the PPE are given priority to Malaysians and specially to front-liners.

Further, we also urge the Ministry to supply free face masks to the private sector front liners starting with Community Pharmacist who are at high risk without proper PPE's.

For the *rakyat*, community pharmacies are one of the few places where they can get face masks and hand sanitizers for their own protection and government pharmacies are where they get their medication.

The *rakyat* too need face masks when going to pharmacies, clinics or hospitals for treatment. However, due to high cost prices and lack of stock, many pharmacies are not able to provide face masks to the *rakyat* as was highlighted by MPS at the meeting with the Ministry on 20.2.2020 with regards to face masks supply.

At the meeting we had also proposed that the facemasks can be provided to the frontliners community pharmacists by the government.

At this same meeting, MPS had not only suggested that face masks be provided for free to front line community pharmacist but also suggested that the Ministry take charge of the face masks supply from the local manufacturers and supply to healthcare workers.

Further, there have been reports of hoarders who stocked up on face masks and are selling at exorbitant prices such as RM5 to RM10 per masks. We urge the Ministry to clamp down on these hoarders who are using the Internet to sell their products to the *rakyat* by profiteering due to the high level of fear about Covid19.

On hand sanitizers there was a meeting called by the Ministry on 25<sup>th</sup> Feb among stakeholders and manufacturers. During the meeting it was re-assured that there are in fact ample stocks, and the manufacturers informed that more stocks are available from mid-March onwards due to shipment arrival of packaging materials.

We hope that the Ministry would take steps to ensure that such stocks are made available without high price increases so that hand sanitizers remain affordable to the *rakyat*.

The MPS is willing to join any initiative by the Ministry to protect our front-line Pharmacist as well as our *rakyat*.

We also take this opportunity to congratulate you on your recent initiatives to increase the ceiling price and ban face masks exports.

In conclusion, we hope our suggestions are taken into consideration for the greater good.

Thank you

Yours sincerely,



Amrahi Buang  
President  
**RPH 581** BPharm (Hons), MMPS

cc.

1. YAB Tan Sri Dato' Haji Muhyiddin bin Haji Mohd Yassin, Prime Minister of Malaysia
2. YB Datuk Seri Dr Adham Bin Baba, Minister of Health Malaysia
3. YBhg Datin Faridah Aryani Binti Md. Yusuf, Senior Director of Pharmaceutical Services