



JOINT STATEMENT • 1 MAY 2022

Tread Cautiously with the Loosening of Restrictions

The Malaysian Health Coalition (MHC) generally welcomes the looser COVID-19 restrictions beginning 1 May 2022, but we ask that the country treads cautiously. We especially welcome the cautious approach of lifting mask mandates in open spaces outdoors whilst maintaining mask mandates indoors and on public transportation including e-hailing vehicles.

We recommend the following:

1. Implement the removal of mask mandates outdoor cautiously

Following the loosening of COVID-19 restrictions including the removal of mask mandates in the [United States of America](#) and the [United Kingdom](#), the number of inpatient admissions has increased with high morbidity rates. In addition to that, only [43%](#) of Malaysian children aged 5 to 11 have received at least one dose of the vaccine; and no vaccinations are available for children below the age of 5. Children are thus at risk of contracting severe COVID and our policies must protect them. Therefore, the removal of mask mandates in outdoor areas right before Raya holidays should proceed with caution.

2. Strengthen community responsibility, especially testing

With the restrictions lifted, the government should continue to focus on educating the public, especially on self-test reporting to ensure all self-tests are reported. At the same time, the public must play their part as responsible citizens. The public should report all self-test results via MySejahtera and undergo home quarantine if their [status](#) on MySejahtera profile is high-risk or if they have been issued Home Surveillance Orders (HSO).

3. Reconsider policies if the situation changes

The relaxation of restrictions may be considered appropriate if it is based on sound evidence. However, these policies must not be set in stone. If the epidemiological, virological or public health situations change, then the policies must be re-considered. Specifically, the Test-and-Release policy allowing for release from quarantine on Day 4 if a supervised RTK Antigen test returns negative may need to be reconsidered. Aligned with our previous joint statement dated [10 February 2022](#), we re-emphasise the need to increase our genomic sequencing capacity to detect variants and to inform our public policies.

While Malaysia remains at the 'transition to endemicity' stage, we must continue to educate that COVID-19 is still a threat to the collective health of the Rakyat.

BERKHIDMAT UNTUK NEGARA.

Malaysian Health Coalition (Full Signature List on myhealthcoalition.org)

1 May 2022

Full signature list:**Organisations**

1. Academy of Medicine Malaysia
2. Association of Malaysian Optometrists
3. College of Anaesthesiologists
4. College of Surgeons Academy of Medicine of Malaysia
5. Malaysian Association for Bronchology and Interventional Pulmonology
6. Malaysian Association of Clinical Biochemists
7. Malaysian Association of Environmental Health
8. Malaysian Coalition on Aging
9. Malaysian Association of Dental Public Health Specialists
10. Malaysian Nurses Association
11. Malaysian Pharmacists Society
12. Malaysian Society of Anaesthesiologists
13. Malaysian Society of Clinical Psychology
14. Malaysian Society of Occupational Safety and Health
15. Medical Practitioners Coalition Association of Malaysia
16. Obstetrical and Gynaecological Society of Malaysia
17. Perinatal Society of Malaysia
18. Public Health Malaysia

Individuals

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2. Dr Khor Swee Kheng
3. Prof Dr Asri Said
4. Prof Dr Roslina Abdul Manap
5. Prof Dr Zaleha Abdullah Mahdy

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