

## Workplace health and safety under OSHA is the collective responsibility of all parties

PETALING JAYA: Though vaccination had not been mandated by law, the employers, employees and the government owe a duty to ensure that workplace safety and health standards under the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) 1994 was upheld.

MEF President Dato' Dr Syed Hussain Syed Husman J.P., in support of the statement by the Minister of Human Resources YB Datuk Seri M. Saravanan on the employers' rights to insist that employees be vaccinated against Covid-19, said workplace safety was the collective responsibility of all parties, including the government.

"Employers, employees and the government are parties to this agreement and only by working together can we eradicate the spread of Covid-19 infections at the workplace," said Dato' Syed Hussain today.

"The government has done their best to achieve herd immunity and the international data indicated that communities that are fully vaccinated were managing their Covid-19 situation well.

"In business, our clients, both local and foreign, request only fully-vaccinated staff to enter and service their locations. Therefore, all employees are responsible to carry out their duties as per their employment contracts.

"If this is not fulfilled, it may tantamount to breach of employment contract."

He said employers must also be cognisant of employees who refuse the vaccine due to certified medical reasons that were verified by approved medical authorities.

"In such situations, the employers must do their best to assign such employees to perform alternative assignments," said Dato' Dr Syed Hussain.

"Employers understand that in a society of employees there will be some who simply cannot be vaccinated. Therefore, such employees must accept alternative assignment which will be a win-win for both parties.

"We also urge the government to provide special passport for employees who cannot be vaccinated on medical grounds in order to enable them to perform their jobs, and these people must not be discriminated in any way."

To dispel fears of vaccine hesitant employees, he commended the government for taking constructive efforts to ensure transparency on the efficacy of the vaccines and to record and publish vaccine adverse events to the public.

“MEF thanks the Prime Minister, the Ministry of Human Resources and the Ministry of Health in their efforts to make our workplace safe and free of Covid-19,” he said.

“However, the relevant OSHA provisions work both ways in terms of vaccine efficacy and adverse events too as this concerns the safety and health of all Malaysians.

“The decision of the Ministry of Health to publicise transparent research and data on vaccine efficacy, and incidences of adverse events is a move in the right direction as this should abolish the fears of those who are still vaccine hesitant.

“The safety of the majority should always prevail and we must work together as part of *Keluarga Malaysia* to avoid further spread of Covid-19.

“Only collective responsibility and accountability of all parties would ensure success. The government and employers are doing their part and the employees are encouraged to do their part by being vaccinated.”

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