

UGM Epidemiologist: Government Should Prioritize Meeting Vaccine Needs Over Sanction Policy

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Currently, people are debating over the administrative and criminal sanctions for citizens who refuse the Covid-19 vaccine. Presidential Regulation No. 14 of 2021 on Vaccines Procurement and Implementation of Vaccinations to Respond Covid-19 Pandemic states that citizens who refuse vaccination are subject to sanctions.

Responding to this, UGM Epidemiologist Bayu Satria Wiratama, S.Ked., MPH. said he disagreed on the sanctions coming into effect because the government itself did not communicate and educate the need for vaccines to combat Covid-19 to the max.

“I am among the people who disagree with fines for refusing vaccines. The government’s communication and education efforts itself are not maximal,” said Bayu Satria, Thursday (18/2).

According to Bayu, what the government now needs to do is provide as many vaccines as possible for all layers of society and make sure they get vaccinated. “The most important thing is the availability of vaccines,” he explained.



However, he agreed with the proposal from the Governor of Central Java, Ganjar Pranowo. It said that those who refused vaccination at this time should get their schedule postponed while still receiving education about its importance. The government then prioritized vaccinating others who needed it more.

“Include them in the last period of the vaccination schedule. They may change their mind as more and more vaccinated people show more positive effects than negative ones,” he said.

According to Bayu, regarding the government’s target to complete vaccination by the end of this year, as seen through the current availability of vaccines, it will be hard to achieve since the efforts to meet the need for large quantities of vaccines are still minimal. “If there is no improvement, I think it will be difficult to achieve the target as the vaccines for the second stage are not even sufficiently available,” he concluded.

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