

Singapore shares COVID-19 vaccination strategy with newly approved Pfizer vaccine

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With the Health Sciences Authority approval of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine for emergency use in Singapore, the first shipment is due to arrive by the end of December.

Addressing his fellow citizens, Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong shared on 14 Dec 2020 that, “Other vaccines are also expected to arrive in Singapore in the coming months, and the country will have enough vaccines for everyone by the third quarter of next year if all goes according to plan. The Ministry of Health has established a committee of doctors and experts to recommend a vaccination strategy”.

“The committee has proposed that our entire adult population should be vaccinated, but to make vaccinations voluntary. Priority will be given to those at greatest risk, such as frontline and healthcare workers, and the elderly and vulnerable. Committee to progressively vaccinate the rest of the population by the end of 2021,” said Mr Lee expressing his personal confidence in the safety and efficacy of the vaccine.

Vaccinations will be free for all Singaporeans as well as long-term residents currently in Singapore. Two doses are required to be administered 21 days apart, in people aged 16 years and above, according to the vaccination regime submitted by Pfizer-BioNTech. The volume of doses and financial details of the agreement were not disclosed.

“Singapore has been tracking the development of over 200 plus COVID-19 vaccines on the race and been in close conversation with pharmaceutical companies at the early stages. The government secured advance purchase agreements with early-down payments for the most promising candidates including Moderna, Pfizer-BioNTech, and Sinovac. Singapore had reserved more than S\$1 billion for the exercise” shared PM Lee.

“We made arrangements with pharmaceutical companies to facilitate their clinical trials and drug development in Singapore and attracted a few to establish vaccine manufacturing capabilities here. Local efforts to develop a vaccine were also

supported allowing Singapore's scientists and researchers the opportunity to do cutting-edge work and to be insured in case of the disrupted global supply chain " said PM Lee.

Lee appreciated Singapore's strong ecosystem for cargo handling which will be a boon for cold chain management with the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine needing to be stored at minus 70 degrees Celsius. Locally based international logistic companies such as DHL and FedEx will play a major role in vaccine shipment along with Airlines staffs who are certified to handle and transport pharmaceutical supplies.