BioSpectrum
the business of Bio & Health Sciences
ASIA EDITION

Singapore plans vaccine injury financial assistance programme

January 4, 2021 | News

Health Sciences Authority (HSA) will only allow a COVID-19 vaccine to be used if it is assessed to be sufficiently efficacious and safe for use



The Ministry of Health (MOH) at Singapore will introduce a vaccine injury financial assistance programme to provide support for persons who suffer a serious adverse event that is assessed to be related to COVID-19 vaccines administered in Singapore.

"While we expect few to need this, the programme will give peace of mind to those taking the vaccination. Further details on the programme will be provided in due course", said Gan Kim Yong, Minister for Health.

Health Sciences Authority (HSA) will only allow a COVID-19 vaccine to be used if it is assessed to be sufficiently efficacious and safe for use, and only if the benefits of the vaccine are assessed to outweigh the risks of any potential adverse effects from the vaccination.

HSA has put the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine through this rigorous review process and has authorised its use. The Moderna and Sinovac vaccines are also currently undergoing the review process.

In addition, HSA requires vaccine manufacturers to submit new information continually for active review. HSA and the Expert Committee will continue to monitor and review the efficacy and safety of COVID-19 vaccines in the local population and internationally. This includes data on specific population subgroups such as those below age of 16, persons with immunosuppression, or pregnant women who were excluded from initial clinical trials. HSA and the Expert Committee will also look at long-term safety data to detect rare and severe adverse events, and study the durability of protection provided by the vaccines. This on-going monitoring is the norm expected for any vaccines that first come into use.

To ensure access to the vaccine, COVID-19 vaccination will be free for all Singaporeans, Permanent Residents and long-term residents in Singapore, which will include Employment Pass, S-Pass, Work Permit holders, Foreign Domestic Workers, and Dependant's Pass, Long-Term Visit Pass and Student Pass holders, totalling about 5.7 million people. This excludes Short-Term Visit Pass holders, such as tourists.