

Chinese medicine hall operators fear they cannot clear liquor stock before sales ban takes effect

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CHINESE medicine halls in Kuala Lumpur that sell liquor will face a huge problem if they are not able to clear their stock when the sales restriction takes effect next month.

Sundry and Chinese medicine shop owner Loh Kim Fong said such business owners usually had sufficient stock to last over a year.

"This is to cater to their regular customers and to ensure they are not disappointed.

"Despite the government's announcement on this restriction on Nov 16 last year, we still did not have ample time to clear our stock," he said.

Initially set to be enforced on Oct 1, the liquor sales restriction guideline prohibiting sundry shops, convenience stores and Chinese medicine halls in Kuala Lumpur to sell hard liquor was postponed for a month.

One of the items in the new guideline also bans the sale of liq-



Chin: DBKL should engage with stakeholders to get a clearer picture and direction.

uor by businesses located near police stations, places of worship, schools and hospitals.

"Coupled with the bleak business climate during the movement control order, liquor sales slowed down.

"I consider myself luckier as I have another shop in Taman Megah, Petaling Jaya, so the

remaining stock can be sold there," added Loh, who is also the president of Federal Territory and Selangor Chinese Medicine/Drug Dealers Association.

Some 300 Chinese medicine hall owners in Kuala Lumpur, he said, had expressed their worries and disappointment over the liquor sales restrictions.

"All along, we have followed the guideline. Shops near police stations, places of worship, schools and hospitals have not applied for liquor sales licence.

"A blanket ban on all Chinese medicine halls selling liquor is not fair," he said.

Meanwhile, Federation of Sundry Goods Merchants Association of Malaysia president Hong Chee Meng said enforcement of the ban on the sale of hard liquor was like stripping the meaning of 'convenience' from convenience stores.

"The idea of convenience stores and sundry shops is to have all types of goods under one roof,

especially for tourists, and this includes liquor.

"We support the government's move to ban the sale of illicit liquor like *samsu* but not commercial brands approved by the Customs Department," he said, adding that the ban would also reduce the government's revenue obtained from licence fees and excise duty.

Federal Territories MCA DBKL Affairs Bureau chief Banie Chin said DBKL should engage with relevant stakeholders to get a clearer picture and proper direction on the matter.

"Perhaps they can extend the postponement period to six months to allow affected business owners to clear their stock.

"We are now in the midst of Phase Three of the National Recovery Plan and businesses are still recovering from the pandemic.

"So, this is not the time to tighten up the sale of liquor and it will cause more inconvenience to businesses," said Chin, who is also Seputeh MCA vice-chairman.