

**MEDIA RELEASE**

## **SINOVAC, GLOBAL PARTNERS TURN FOCUS TO FIGHT AGAINST OMICRON COVID-19 VARIANT**

**SHAH ALAM, 30 NOVEMBER 2021** – Pharmaniaga Berhad (Pharmaniaga), the exclusive product registration holder and sole distributor of Sinovac COVID-19 vaccine in Malaysia, assures that Sinovac Biotech Ltd (Sinovac) is closely monitoring clinical study progress related to the Omicron variant and is actively collecting and obtaining information as well as samples related to the new variants through its global partner network.

The new, Omicron (B.1.1.529) COVID-19 variant, which was designated as a variant of concern (VoC) by the World Health Organisation (WHO) on November 26, was identified in South Africa and has so far been detected in Europe and Asia. The new VoC has raised concern worldwide given the number of mutations and reports that it might spread or even evade antibodies from prior infection or vaccination.

Pharmaniaga Group Managing Director Datuk Zulkarnain Md Eusope said, "Our vaccine scientists are in constant communication with Sinovac scientists on the latest Omicron variant which WHO has now designated as a SARS-CoV-2 VoC and has confirmed that this variant will spread more quickly than other forms of COVID-19 virus.

"We are following closely with Sinovac which is carrying out evaluations to understand the in-depth impact of the Omicron variant on the existing SARS-CoV-2 inactivated vaccine. They often update us on the on-going research that will determine whether it is necessary to develop a new vaccine against the Omicron variant.

"Sinovac has the expertise and capabilities, as well as the strong production and quality control systems to produce sufficient vaccines, as required. The Company has previously conducted the development of inactivated vaccines against Gamma and Delta variants.

"If necessary, it will be able to rapidly advance that development and launch mass-production of new vaccines to meet the vaccine demand," he said, adding that Pharmaniaga is a partner to Sinovac's global phase III COVID-19 vaccine clinical trial for children aged 3 to 11 years which is currently being conducted in Malaysia.

Datuk Zulkarnain said Sinovac has published a series of data that Sinovac recipients who received the same vaccine for booster shot would lead to a strong boost in immune response, with geometric mean titres (GMTs) increasing to approximately 140 and immense increase in neutralising antibodies, up to 20 times after the second dose.

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## MEDIA RELEASE

According to WHO, GMT is the average antibody titre for a group of subjects calculated by multiplying all values and taking the  $n$ th root of this number, where  $n$  is the number of subjects with available data<sup>1</sup>.

“WHO and the Ministry of Health recommended that Sinovac recipients to get the booster shot within 3-6 months after receiving the second dose for optimum protection and it is possible that the protection provided by taking a Sinovac booster dose may be sufficient to fight against this new deadly variant.

“We know that it is only a matter of time before the new variant will spread to Malaysia, so before that happens, let's protect ourselves and boost our antibody levels by getting Sinovac booster dose,” said Datuk Zulkarnain, adding that Pharmaniaga has started to supply Sinovac COVID-19 booster dose at designated private hospitals and clinics, following the approval by Drug Control Authority (DCA) recently.

Pharmaniaga is the leading pharmaceutical Company of Boustead Holdings Berhad group of companies, and together with Lembaga Tabung Angkatan Tentera, are the major shareholders of the Company.

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### **About Pharmaniaga Berhad**

Pharmaniaga is the leading pharmaceutical company of Boustead Holdings Berhad Group of Companies, which together with the Armed Forces Fund Board, are the major shareholders of the Company. Listed on the Main Board of Bursa Malaysia, Pharmaniaga's core businesses are generic pharmaceuticals manufacturing; research and development; marketing and sales; warehousing and distribution of pharmaceutical and medical products; supply, trading and installation of medical and hospital equipment as well as community pharmacy.

With a vision to be the premier Malaysian pharmaceutical company, Pharmaniaga is guided by its philosophy of 'Do It Right Always' and is empowered by its motto of Passion for Patients. Strengthened by nine manufacturing plants, nationwide logistics and distribution in Malaysia and Indonesia as well as products registered in 15 countries, Pharmaniaga Group is positioned to be a regional player in the international pharmaceutical arena.

### **Forward-looking statement**

This release may contain certain forward-looking statements with respect to the financial conditions, results of operations and business of the Group and certain plans and objectives of Pharmaniaga Berhad with respect to these items. By their nature, forward-looking statements involve risk and uncertainty because they relate to events and depend on circumstances that will occur in the future and there are many factors that could cause actual results and developments to differ materially from those expressed or implied by these forward-looking statements.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.who.int/biologicals/expert\\_committee/Clinical\\_changes\\_IK\\_final.pdf](https://www.who.int/biologicals/expert_committee/Clinical_changes_IK_final.pdf)