



**REMARKS BY ACTING MINISTER OF HEALTH, MMAMOLOKO KUBAYI:
VIRTUAL MEDIA BRIEFING – FRIDAY, 09 JULY 2021**

- Good morning to everyone who has joined us for the briefing this morning.
- As the number of infections and number of hospitalisations increase, so has the number of deaths.
- This means more of us are losing their loved ones, mothers, fathers, sisters, uncles, aunts, cousins, friends and colleagues.
- This is because often when we see the numbers rising, it never occurs to us that that number may include a loved one until they are hospitalised or lose their life.
- Let us continue to be vigilant and take the necessary measures to protect ourselves, our families, our friends, our neighbours and all the people around us by taking the necessary non-pharmaceutical measures to break transmission.
- In the last 24 hours, 22910 new cases were recorded, which represents a 30.4% positivity testing rate. Of these, Gauteng accounts for 11747 new cases.
- Although all indications are that the number of cases in Gauteng are peaking, however, the province remains the epicentre of the third wave.
- We are extremely worried about the rising number of cases in other provinces that are highly likely to follow the same trend most notably Western Cape, Limpopo, North West, KwaZulu-Natal and Mpumalanga.
- We are ramping our vaccination roll-out programme so that the vaccines can reach the majority of our population so that more people can be protected from the devastating impact of the COVID-19 virus.
- We continue to see more drive and initiatives by various provinces for increased mobilisation for vaccination, of note this week is the vaccine drive through in Gauteng.
- We have encouraged provinces to be innovative in encouraging South Africans to vaccinate.

- We are encouraged that the number of vaccinations per day have surpassed 191 000 yesterday at 17H00 and we are expecting to surpass 250 000 vaccinations per day by next week. In terms of overall vaccinations, we are also happy to announce that we have surpassed 4 million people who have received vaccines.
- Despite these strides we have made, we are still far below what the Inter-ministerial Committee on Vaccines and the President expects us to achieve with regards to vaccination.
- This means that there is a lot of work that the team working on the vaccination programme still need to do. We have to make sure that the vaccines reach all South Africans as quickly as possible.
- We will now pay attention to vaccination per District and make the necessary interventions working together with Provinces
- This week we held a bilateral meeting with National Treasury , where the matter for funding of the vaccination programme was clarified. To this end, we will be starting our work to ensure the availability of human capital to vaccinate over weekends as well.
- Our target for this is the 1st of August 2021 and my appeal that we continue working together with the provinces to achieve this target.
- In addition to the persons aged 50 and above, on the 15th of July 2021, registration for persons aged between 35 and 49 will open and they will start vaccination from the 1st August 2021.
- Dr Nicholas Crisp will provide more details on the progress of the vaccination programme.
- Last week, the South African Health Products Authority (SAHPRA) on the approval of the CoronaVac COVID-19 vaccine, manufactured by Sinovac Life Science for use in South Africa.
- The approval came at a time when the demand for vaccines as more and more people are yearning to get vaccines.
- CoronaVac will boost the vaccine supply for country`s vaccination rollout programme in addition to those we already receive from Pfizer and Johnson & Johnson.
- Following the approval, we are expecting an advisory from VMAC in order to take the process forward. They understand the urgency of the matter.
- We are joined by Dr Boitumelo Semete-Makokotlela to give details about the SAHPRA processes with regards to CoronaVac.

- Scientists have discovered that there is a new variant that is even more transmissible that is spreading in different parts of the world.
- This new variant is called the Lambda variant. By June 2021, the Lambda variant had begun to spread through South America and was detected in twenty-nine countries in total, especially in Argentina, Chile and Ecuador.
- Now it has been found in more than 30 countries. Contrary to the false reports that you might have read, the Lambda variant has not been picked up yet by our scientists in the country.
- We are joined in this briefing by Professor Oliviera who will provide details about the Lambda variant.
- As I have already mentioned, we are worried about the growing cases in the Western Cape. We are joined in this briefing by Dr Keith Cloete who will present to the public the COVID-19 situation in Western Cape and the state of readiness for the third wave containment.
- We also joined by the Director General of the Department of Health Dr Sandile Buthelezi together with Deputy Director General, Dr Anban Pillay who will assist in responding to some of the questions.
- Deputy Minister Dr Joe Phaahla has also joined us and he will do the closing remarks to bring this briefing to a close.
- Let me also thank healthcare workers doctors, nurses and all other supporting staff in health-care centres for continuing to be in the forefront of the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Again, let me appeal to all South Africans to work with us in the fight against the pandemic and thank all those who have been complying with the regulations that are aimed at containing the spread of the virus.