



Wes-Kaapse Provinsiale Parlement Western Cape Provincial Parliament IPalamente yePhondo leNtshona Koloni

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Report 13/ 2021

Ref: Health Update /'Adjusted' Alert Level 3 lockdown

Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on COVID-19, in performing oversight over the work of the provincial executive authority as it responds to the COVID-19 pandemic, including oversight over any part of the provincial executive authority, any provincial department, any organ of state and any provincial entity involved in activities dealing with the pandemic, on the themes/meetings covered for May 2021, as follows:

The Ad Hoc Committee on COVID-19 consists of the following members:

Mr R Allen (DA)
Mr D America (DA)
Ms D Baartman (DA)
Mr G Bosman (DA)
Ms L Botha (DA)
Mr F Christians (ACDP)
Mr C Dugmore (ANC)
Mr B Herron (GOOD)
Ms P Lekker (ANC)
Mr P Marais (FFP)
Ms W Philander (DA)
Mr A van der Westhuizen (DA)
Ms M Wenger (DA) (Chairperson)
Ms R Windvogel (ANC)
Mr M Xego (EFF)

Alternative Members:

Mr R MacKenzie (DA)
Ms M Maseko (DA)
Ms N Nkondlo (ANC)
Mr K Sayed (ANC)
Mr D Smith (ANC)

Procedural Staff:

Ms W Hassen-Moosa, Procedural Officer
Ms S Jones, Procedural Officer
Ms B Daza, Senior Procedural Officer
Mr M Sassman, Manager: Committee Support

1. Introduction and Background

The Ad Hoc Committee on COVID-19 (the Committee) was established by the Speaker of the Western Cape Provincial Parliament on 14 April 2020 in accordance with Standing Rule 119(1)(b) of the Standing Rules of Western Cape Provincial Parliament. The Committee was tasked with the responsibility to perform oversight over the work of the provincial executive authority as it responds to the COVID-19 pandemic, including oversight over any part of the provincial executive authority, any provincial department, any organ of state and any provincial entity involved in activities dealing with the pandemic.

The meetings have been held virtually, so as to comply with COVID-19 lockdown regulations issued by National Government, as well as a decision of the Programming Authority, to enforce social distancing rules.

2. Election of Chairperson, Adopted Themes and the Rules of Engagement

On 17 April 2020, Member M Wenger (DA) was elected to serve as the Chairperson of the Committee in accordance with Standing Rules 82(1) and 85. The Committee adopted 12 themes around which it would address the COVID-19 pandemic. The 12 adopted themes were as follows:

1. Health Department Responses and Preparations
2. Policing, Security and Police Brutality
3. Food Security
4. Protection of the Vulnerable
5. Disaster Management and Local Government Oversight
6. Economic Recovery, Support and Livelihoods
7. Transport and Infrastructure
8. Schooling and Education
9. Human Settlements
10. Citizen Surveillance
11. Intergovernmental Relations and Community Cooperation
12. Government Finance and Budgets

3. Additionally, the Rules of Engagement during virtual meetings were indicated as follows:

1. All meetings would be open to members of the public and media via livestreaming;
2. All Members microphones must be muted at the beginning of the meeting to avoid background noise;
3. Members are to flag Points of Order in the Chat Function of Microsoft Teams (the application through which virtual meetings are held);
4. All videos and audio must be switched off to improve the quality of the connection; however, if a Member/Minister/HOD/Official is speaking, they may put on their audio and video;
5. Participants must switch off their microphones once they are finished speaking;
6. In terms of maintenance of order, in accordance with the "Directives for Sittings of the House and Meetings of Committees by Electronic Means", ATC'd on Friday, 17 April 2020, Section 8 states that "when a Member is considered to be out of order by the presiding officer, the presiding officer may mute the microphone of such a Member and call such a Member to order"; and
7. Section 10 of the Directives ATC'd on 17 April 2020 speaks to the application of Standing Rules. Section 10 states that "in instances where these directives are not clear or do not cover a particular eventuality in respect of sittings of the House or meetings of the committees by means of videoconferencing, the Standing Rules must apply as far as this

is reasonably and practically possible and, in instances where they cannot be applied, the ruling by the presiding officer must be final”.

4. The themes/meeting covered in May 2021 included:

4.1 Health Department Responses and Preparations

5. THEMES: Health Update, ‘Adjusted’ Alert Level 3 lockdown and rollout of the vaccine

5.1 Overview and background

The Committee requested a briefing from the provincial Minister of Health and the provincial Department of Health on an update on the COVID-19 pandemic in the Western Cape, on 25 May 2021.

The purpose of the meeting was to get a health update on COVID-19 indicators and situational analysis. The Department was also requested to provide an update on the progress of the vaccine roll-out which was due to start on 17 May 2021. The Department was further requested to brief the Committee on whether the B.1.617 COVID-19 variant, first detected in India (Delta Variant), has been detected in the Western Cape and the measures/ preparations that are in place to prevent its spread.

5.2. Briefing by the Minister of Health and the Head of the Department of Health

Observations and challenges

- 5.2.1. The Minister of Health, Dr. N Mbombo, informed the Committee that the Province is in resurgence according to epidemiologists. It could result in a third wave around the first week or the fourth week of June 2021 depending on the behavior or any other changes with regards to the vaccination.

The Department has to finalise Phase 1B of the healthcare workers which is 90% of the vaccines. They envisage about 70 vaccination sites in the metropolitan area and about 200 plus in the rural areas whilst it is mandatory for the people to register before they get vaccinated.

The City of Cape Town has assisted the department with access to the Wi-Fi centers in their libraries within the local government space and the Thusong Centres so that it could be able to help people to register for vaccination.

5.3. Health update

5.3.1. Surveillance & Response Update

Dr. K Cloete, the Head of the Department of Health, reported that the number of daily new COVID-19 cases has increased on an average of 200 new diagnoses each day with a 25% week on week increase (slightly slower than last week). Admissions and deaths continue to increase but the absolute numbers are still very small. On average there are 30-35 admissions and four deaths each day.

The Resurgence Monitor showed a sustained increase for 12 days in the number of new cases in the current week vs the previous week, so the province remains in a resurgence state, although the week-on-week percentage increases have declined.

The Department indicated that it has not yet met the criteria for being in a third wave, but could enter the third wave in 2-3 weeks if the current trajectory continues.

5.3.2. Preparation for the third wave

SA COVID-19 Modelling Consortium predicts a third wave that will be smaller than the second wave in the Western Cape but there is a lot of uncertainty e.g. if different variants emerge. The Department of Health indicated that if they respond strongly and quickly to an increase in cases they can dramatically reduce the number of admissions and deaths. The Department did not want the preparation for the third wave to interrupt the vaccine programme.

Variant first detected in India and UK and checked with the virology labs:

- No identification of B.1.617 (Delta) in the Western Cape.
- No further identification of B.1.1.7 (Alpha) beyond the eight that were reported in early May.
- They experienced some challenges with sequencing machines – so some specimens are still waiting to be sequenced.
- Given the spread of B.1.617 to more than a dozen countries, a travel ban has not been considered to be feasible (informal communication with MAC).
- Vigilance at airports should be maintained.

The Department of Health reported that it was noticing a very concerning increase in the number of cases and remains in resurgence. Behaviour change is key to mitigate the third wave. In order to delay the onset and/or reduce the size of the third wave (flatten the curve) more people need to be vaccinated.

Currently there are 763 COVID patients in acute hospitals (416 in public hospitals and 347 in private hospitals). This excludes PUIs and cases in specialised hospital settings.

5.3.3 Vaccine Implementation update

An estimated 70% target of health care workers were vaccinated via the Sisonke Programme. The balance of health care workers - Phase 1b - commenced on 17 May 2021. 33 900 doses of the Pfizer vaccine to complete Phase 1 and commence with Phase 2, were received in the province on 13 May 2021.

The Western Cape received a total 95 880 doses of the J&J vaccine to vaccinate healthcare workers as part of the Sisonke Programme. The Sisonke Programme started on 17 February 2021 and concluded on 15 May 2021. Phase 2A which is age 60 years and older, the number of vaccines to be administered are 719 668, Phase 2B ages 40 -49 years of 1 631 040, Phase 3A ages 30-39 years of 1 314 059 and Phase 3B 18 -29 years of 1 378 556.

A total of 10 289 vaccines were administered during Week 1 of implementation (896 in private sector and 9 393 in public sector). This included healthcare workers, persons over 60 years presenting at vaccination sites and outreaches to Residential Care Facilities (Old-Aged Homes).

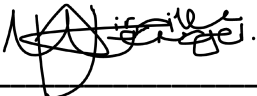
The vaccine registration dashboard aims to address the following:

- How many elderly (60yrs+) are there across the Western Cape and where are the clusters of elderly in communities?
- What is the distribution of the elderly population across the communities which have high levels of socio-economic vulnerability?
- What the estimated elderly population within a 1 to 5km radius of a vaccination site?

- Where additional support should be provided to improve registration numbers across communities?
- What are the surrounding footprints of social facilities (like WiFi sites) which may support vaccination efforts?

6. Acknowledgements

The Chairperson thanked the Department of Health for its hard work in the sector so far during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Chairperson also thanked the Members for their participation in the meetings held so far.



MS M WENGER (MPP)

CHAIRPERSON OF THE AD-HOC COMMITTEE ON COVID-19

DATE: 23 July 2021