



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

Ref Number: 657

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## Report 15/ 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 August 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 August 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 25 August 2021.

The purpose of the meeting was to receive an update on the progression of the COVID-19 pandemic with specific reference to the indicators, modelling and situational analysis of the third wave and an update on the progress of the vaccine roll-out.

##### **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, Prof. N Mbombo, gave a brief overview on the state of the province in relation to the third wave of COVID-19. She informed the Committee that the Department of Health’s (the Department) presentation would touch on the number of cases as part of the indicators; the number of deaths and hospitalisation; statistics of oxygen usage; healthcare workers’ infection rates, and much more. She indicated that the Department will report on statistics for districts, sub-districts, comparison with townships, as well as lessons learnt by the Department from the data gathered. The Department will report on how it was able to navigate challenges and prepare to mitigate the effect of a possible fourth wave.

The Minister indicated that the Department had to come up with innovative ways of getting vaccines to the people. The Department did not get excited about the increased number of vaccinated people, they did not want to leave ordinary people behind. She informed the Committee that the Department embarked on the ‘jabs before ‘mjolo’ (‘no dating before vaccination’) Awareness Campaign on social media. It is well-known that young people do not like to be perceived as being sickly. The Department has gone to the Central Karoo to bring as many young people as possible and had other upcoming outreach campaigns and the next one will target night clubs in the first week of September. Other upcoming events includes the opening of the drive-through vaccinations, which was another method of getting more people vaccinated.

On the trends of the pandemic, she noted that there was a time the Department was more worried about people aged 60 and above, and therefore prioritised them. Although the Department was still worried about this age group, it was now aware that risk factors increased with age, hospitalisation and deaths. There were potential super-spreaders that do not necessarily get sick often. There were also cases of increased numbers amongst young people, but research has shown that mutations should be prevented, since no one was sure if the fourth wave would bring another variant. The Department was doing all it could to prevent another severe, highly transmissible variant. It was for this reason that young people and men were being targeted to be vaccinated. She further informed the Committee that the Department

would be visiting the taxi ranks on 10 September 2021 as part of its campaign to get more people vaccinated.

### 5.3. Health update

Dr K Cloete, the Head of Department, took the Committee through a comprehensive COVID-19 and Vaccine Update that touched on:

- Surveillance and response update;
- Expectations for the third wave;
- Triggered third-wave response; and
- Vaccine implementation update.

In summary, the Western Cape province was currently at the peak of the third wave, and early signs of a decline were detected, as there were now 3 000 recorded cases per day. A two-percent week-on-week decrease in cases was noted in the Cape Metropolitan area, while the only rural area experiencing an increase in cases was the West Coast region. Although the number of cases was dropping in the Western Cape, there were still quite a lot of active cases and people were still at risk.

The Department would be opening a drive-through at the Athlone stadium in the first week of September. The national Minister of Health, Minister J Phaahla, already launched the Department's hospitality industry vaccination site at the Grand West Casino in the previous week.

Provincial overview saw case numbers have flattened, there was not yet a clear decrease in case numbers. The proportion positive has decreased slightly to an average of 36.1%. The Department is currently seeing an average of 3002 new diagnoses each day. Admissions and deaths have slightly decreased, with an average of 295 new admissions and around 93 deaths each day.

The third wave is much longer than the second wave and the peak has exceeded the second wave in several (sub-) districts: Metro: Klipfontein, Mitchells Plain, Northern, Tygerberg Rural: Central Karoo, Garden Route and the West Coast.

Currently there are 3 701 COVID-19 patients in acute hospitals (2 168 in public hospitals and 1 533 in private hospitals). This excludes PUIs and cases in specialised hospital settings. The Metro mass fatality centre has capacity for 240 bodies; currently 11 deceased (cumulative total of 1 974 bodies) admitted. The overall capacity has been successfully managed across the province.

As at 24 August 2021, the public sector has received 1 859 895 vaccine doses: 1 579 230 Pfizer doses and 280 665 J&J doses. Cumulatively, the vaccines administered in the province till to date were about 1.7 million, with 70% of it for the public sector and 30% for the private sector. The department reported that 750 654 people have been fully vaccinated as of 24 August 2021, and 444 478 have received the second dose of the Pfizer vaccine.

Private sector sites (90 Metro and 51 Rural) and workplace sites are added sequentially. There are weekly updates on active sites per geographic area. Roving teams will visit satellite clinics. There are pop-up sites at strategically selected locations.

Registration for the age category 18 years and older opened on 20 August 2021. The age category 18 – 35 years has dominated uptake since becoming eligible, resulting in the province recording a record number of 53 290 vaccines administered on 20 August 2021. Between 20

and 24 August 2021, a total of 67 936 individuals between the ages of 18 and 34 years have received the COVID-19 vaccine.

The CTICC Vaccination Centre of Hope has administered 55 883 COVID-19 vaccination by 23 August 2021. Up to 23 August 2021, the Athlone Stadium Mass Vaccination Site had recorded a total of 3 794 vaccines administered on EVDS. The EMS Pinelands Mass Site will gear up to assist in getting Matriculants vaccinated ahead of the final examinations.

The Department informed the Committee that the Auditor-General conducted a special Vaccination Programme audit in the Western Cape. During the audit, the team focussed on the following:

- Planning and management of the Covid-19 vaccination roll-out programme;
- Availability of the relevant resources at the vaccination sites;
- Stock management and monitoring systems at the vaccination sites;
- Administration of Covid-19 vaccines at the vaccination sites;
- Disposal of medical waste at the vaccination sites; and
- Communication of Audit Observations.

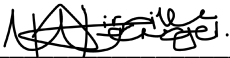
During the audit, the Auditor-General did not identify any shortcomings/audit findings in the Western Cape Vaccination Programme.

The Department utilised the following means of communication to inform the public about the vaccination sites:

- Keeping Safe Messaging
- Enabling easier access (Athlone Vaccination Centre of Hope)
- Boots on the ground taking vaccination to communities
- Localised messaging
- Voices of HCWs “Vaccinate to prevent a 4<sup>th</sup> wave”

## 6. Acknowledgements

The Chairperson thanked the Minister and the provincial Department of Health for the presentation and their answers to all questions posed by Members. She also extended a word of appreciation to all healthcare workers for the tremendous work they are doing to save lives and keep everyone safe. The Chairperson also thanked Members for their participation in the meetings held so far.



**MS M. WENGER (MPP)**

**CHAIRPERSON OF THE AD-HOC COMMITTEE ON COVID-19**

**DATE:**