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HEALTH
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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**TO:
HEADS OF PROVINCIAL HEALTH DEPARTMENTS
HEADS OF PHARMACEUTICAL SERVICES
DISTRICT AND PHC MANAGERS
COVID-19 VACCINE PROGRAMME MANAGERS
COVID-19 VACCINATION SITE MANAGERS
COVID-19 VACCINATORS**

**CIRCULAR: COVID-19 VACCINATION ROLL-OUT – NEXT STEPS FOR
PROVINCIAL HEALTH AND OTHER GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS**

National and Provincial Department of Health responsibilities

1. The National and Provincial Departments of Health are responsible for the general public age cohort roll-out of vaccinations in collaboration with the private sector.
 - 1.1 This includes the registration and vaccination of the public over 60 years of age as the primary target group and the public between 50 and 59 years of age as the next target group,
 - 1.1.1 The EVDS is already allocating vaccination codes to all people over 50 years who register (on their own or through assisted registration)
 - 1.1.2 These EVDS codes are valid for vaccination and all providers at all sites must vaccinate ANY person who has a valid code (do NOT wait until 15th July for the 50+ population)
 - 1.1.3 EVDS has commenced scheduling people between 50 and 59 years and sms's have been sent for vaccination from 5th July 2021
 - 1.1.4 EVDS is also scheduling second doses for those who received a first dose of Pfizer vaccine 42 or more days ago,
 - 1.1.5 Both uninsured and insured people are being scheduled to both public and private sites based only on the nearest site to their declared sub-area of their residence, so no-one should be turned away based on their medical aid status. Reimbursement will be managed centrally (see separate circular on Reimbursement of Uninsured Patients at Private Sites),
 - 1.2 The NDOH has a working group with Business for South Africa (B4SA) to analyse and plan for additional sites where these are most needed to cover underserved areas.
 - 1.2.1 The private sector providers are working with NDOH to identify where they have potential capacity to bring additional private sites into operation,
 - 1.2.2 The NDOH will communicate these developments to PDOHs and will discuss where the PDOHs have potential capacity in the remaining gaps.

- 1.3 The working group at NDOH is monitoring demand for vaccination in all districts and local municipal areas across the country and will communicate regarding those areas where additional effort is required to increase demand for vaccination and improve coverage in order to maintain reasonable equity in access to vaccination.
 - 1.3.1 Preparations are being made to open the 40-to-49-year cohort for public vaccination so that as soon as demand from the older groups slows this further cohort can be given access to vaccination,
 - 1.3.2 All service providers, public and private will be informed in advance of the intended date of such a change after approval from the Inter-Ministerial Committee.
- 1.4 Every vaccination site, public and private, must have a pro-active plan for managing walk-ins for vaccination.
 - 1.4.1 The process for people who walk in must be clearly explained in a visible public notice,
 - 1.4.2 Any unregistered person must be assisted with registration, and must be vaccinated if vaccine is available at the site,
 - 1.4.3 If no vaccine is available the process for accessing vaccination must be explained to the person,
 - 1.4.4 The site is responsible for managing the queues for scheduled and unscheduled (walk-ins) in a manner that maintains social distancing and avoids the risk of spreading the virus,
 - 1.4.5 It is acknowledged that sites operate in different environments and that plans will be specific to each site,
 - 1.4.6 PDOHs are encouraged to use proactive outreach programmes to register and vaccinate the eligible public.
- 1.5 Provincial Departments of Health (with support from the private sector) should continue to provide vaccination in congregate settings especially in Old Age Homes (including providing second doses of Pfizer vaccine).
 - 1.5.1 Consideration should be given to including other residential facilities such as those providing care for people with disabilities and mental illness.
 - 1.5.2 Vaccination of inmates of correctional services facilities is currently being planned, and more information will be shared as this becomes available.

Roll-out of essential worker programme in the public sector

- 2. The National Department of Health is working with key national departments on vertical sectoral vaccination 'projects' for the essential services sectors.
 - 2.1 These sectoral vaccination 'projects' include:
 - 2.1.1 Basic Education Sector
 - 2.1.2 Dept of Defence and Military Veterans
 - 2.1.3 South African Police Service
 - 2.1.4 Dept of Correctional Services
 - 2.1.5 Social Development Sector (incl ECD/SASSA)
 - 2.1.6 Dept of Home Affairs
 - 2.1.7 Dept of Justice
 - 2.1.8 National Prosecuting Authority
 - 2.1.9 Public agencies

- 2.2 The Provincial Departments of Health are not expected to manage the sectoral vaccination 'projects' except for the Social Development Sector:
 - 2.2.1 PDOHs are requested to keep the sites that were opened for the "DBE Project" open for the Social Development Sector Project and to assist with vaccination using the same process as was used for the basic education sector (further communication will follow),
 - 2.2.2 The Department of Social Development is still planning and cleaning data sets and NO ANNOUNCEMENT will be made regarding the Social Development Sector Vaccination project until the EVDS and NDOH are satisfied that the eligibility criteria are clear and verifiable, and that the quality and completeness of data are confirmed,
 - 2.2.3 This project will target around 220 000 people including:
 - 2.2.3.1 Department of Social Development personnel
 - 2.2.3.2 South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) personnel
 - 2.2.3.3 Public and private social workers and associated professionals and auxiliaries registered with the South African Council for Social Service Professions
 - 2.2.3.4 Development workers in the Department of Social Development
 - 2.2.3.5 Early Childhood Development practitioners and staff registered with DSD on the Stimulus Relief Package
 - 2.2.3.6 National Development Agency personnel

3. The vaccination of the outstanding Health Care Workers (HCWs) is ongoing.
 - 3.1 A circular has already been posted on the process for vaccinating HCWs and on the use of then V4HCW portal,
 - 3.2 All HCWs who are already registered on the EVDS should make direct arrangements with any public or private vaccination site to be vaccinated,
 - 3.3 Any HCW who is registered with a Health Council or who is an employee on Persal may register on EVDS through the V4HCW verification portal,
 - 3.4 Private employers of HCWs in the qualifying categories may from this week approach the V4HCW administrators to verify their bona fide employees so that they may register on the EVDS,
 - 3.5 This route to vaccination registration will be open until 31st July 2021.

4. The police (SAPS) are managing their own vaccination project .
 - 4.1 The police, both Police Act and Public Service Act appointees, will be vaccinated in their own sites linked to registered private sites managed through Polmed and their service provider.
 - 4.1.1 SAPS has taken full responsibility for all aspects of the programme including procurement, distribution and vaccination,
 - 4.1.2 Provincial Health Departments will not be required to assist SAPS,
 - 4.1.3 SAPS will begin vaccinating their members during the course of this week,
 - 4.1.4 The national launch will take place at Orlando Stadium in Soweto on Monday, 5th July,

- 4.1.5 Provincial launches are scheduled to take place on Thursday, 9th July.n
5. The Department of Defence and Military Veterans is responsible for the whole SANDF vaccination programme.
- 5.1 SAMHS will be vaccinating their members and veterans.
- 5.1.1 Further details will be announced by the SANDF, but it is expected that they will begin their programme on 8th July,
- 5.1.2 SAMHS has taken full responsibility for all aspects of the programme including procurement, distribution and vaccination,
- 5.1.3 Provincial Health Departments will not be required to assist SAMHS/SANDF.
6. The Department of Correctional Services (DCS) staff vaccination is still under discussion and details will be communicated when finalised.
7. Plans are evolving for the vaccination of the personnel in the departments of Justice, Home Affairs, the National Prosecuting Authority and public agencies.
8. A system has been established for evaluation and authorisation of ‘Special Cases’, including the processing of travel requests for students studying abroad and people working abroad. A separate policy framework has been developed and a separate circular will be distributed.
9. The role of DPSA and GEMS in the vaccination of the remaining public sector and their working with the provincial administrations are under discussion and will be communicated in due course.
10. The prioritisation of essential services is under consideration by the National Technical Task Team of Directors General and will be announced after approval by the Covid-19 Inter-Ministerial Committee.

Prioritised sectors of the economy

11. The prioritisation of the sectors of the economy was announced by the President some time ago.
- 11.1 Major sectors that have already commenced vaccination programmes include:
- 11.1.1 Mining
- 11.1.2 Manufacturing (automotive)
- 11.1.3 Taxi operators
- 11.2 Sectoral programmes have commenced, and many companies have started with vaccination of their own employees and their contractor employees,
- 11.3 These companies are using their own workplace health services, either in-house Occupational Health Services (OHS) or by sourcing Wellness service providers, to vaccinate their employees,
- 11.3.1 Scheduling of vaccination of consenting employees is managed by the company in order to minimise workplace disruption,

- 11.3.2 Employees are vaccinated by age group following the national age cohort strategy noting that workplaces cover the 40 years and above age cohorts,
- 11.3.3 Employers have taken full responsibility for all aspects of the programme including procurement, distribution and vaccination,
- 11.3.4 Provincial Health Departments will not be required to assist these workplaces,
- 11.3.5 In several places, especially mines, the companies have volunteered to assist with vaccination of the families of their employees and of the surrounding communities,
- 11.3.6 Where these offers are made the programmes must be managed in consultation with the responsible PDOHs.

Issues related to the EVDS

- 12. It is important for patient safety monitoring and for management and reporting of vaccines and vaccination that ONLY people with a valid EVDS vaccination code are vaccinated.
- 12.1 Anyone who is eligible to be vaccinated must be assisted with registration and vaccinated.
- 12.2 Any person who presents to ANY vaccination site whether scheduled or walking in with a valid EVDS code must be vaccinated provided there is vaccine available,
- 12.3 No paper records are allowed, especially for any person for whom there is no EVDS code, and the practice of using paper records must be stopped.
- 12.4 There is no process for the back-capture of these records, and it exposes the departments, private providers and vaccinators to fraud.

Should you have any queries regarding this communique or would like additional information, please contact Dr Nicholas Crisp at nicholas.crisp@health.gov.za.



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**For DR SSS BUTHELEZI
DIRECTOR-GENERAL: HEALTH
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