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Media Statement

16 May 2021

As of today the cumulative number of COVID-19 cases identified in South Africa is **1 613 728**.

Province	Total cases for 16 May 2021	Percentage total
Eastern Cape	196592	12,2
Free State	94621	5,9
Gauteng	434597	26,9
KwaZulu-Natal	338029	20,9
Limpopo	64449	4,0
Mpumalanga	79950	5,0
North West	71053	4,4
Northern Cape	44651	2,8
Western Cape	289786	18,0
Unknown	0	0,0
Total	1613728	100,0

Testing Data

The number of tests conducted to date is **11 115 048**. Of these **27 543** tests were conducted since the last report

Sector	Total tested		New tested	
PRIVATE	6 247 236	56%	15 971	58%
PUBLIC	4 867 812	44%	11 572	42%
Total	11 115 048		27 543	

Deaths and Recoveries

Today, **27** COVID-19 related deaths have been reported: Eastern Cape 0, Free State 2, Gauteng 10, Kwa-Zulu Natal 5, Limpopo 0, Mpumalanga 6, North West 0, Northern Cape 1 and Western Cape 3 which brings the total to **55 210** deaths.

We convey our condolences to the loved ones of the departed and thank the health care workers who treated the deceased patients.

The cumulative recoveries now stand at **1 524 352** representing a recovery rate of 94,4%.

Province	Total Deaths	Total Recoveries	Active Cases
Eastern Cape	11615	184 612	365
Free State	4018	84 976	5 627
Gauteng	10875	416 051	7 671
KwaZulu-Natal	10459	321 777	5 793
Limpopo	2336	61 718	395
Mpumalanga	1421	77 429	1 100
North West	1798	64 489	4 766
Northern Cape	979	37 700	5 972
Western Cape	11709	275 600	2 477
Total	55 210	1 524 352	34 166

Transcript from the Press Conference: Launch of Phase Two Vaccination

It gives us great pleasure, as the National Health Council, to give details to the public about the mass vaccination campaign that will kick off tomorrow.

We know that everyone has been very anxious to know what will happen tomorrow and how we will start to vaccinate our most vulnerable citizens and then move onto vaccinating the general population- I am happy the MEC's have joined me here today because they will each detail the provincial plans in a moment.

The Sisonke Programme has now ended and has vaccinated a total of 478 733 South Africans. The Programme received a total of 500 000 doses. These doses will not be used for phase two or phase three, but will be used by the Medical research Council to conduct important studies and programmes that will help us to understand how the vaccines work for population groups such as persons living with HIV and other co-morbidities, elite athletes, pregnant and lactating women and other special groups.

At midnight another 325 260 doses of Pfizer will arrive, bringing the total Pfizer doses in the country to 975 780 by tomorrow morning. We will continue to vaccinate health care workers, and complete the targeted 1,2 million by the end of the week. We will also begin to vaccinate citizens 60 years and older, who are the most vulnerable for becoming ill or dying of COVID-19. Five million senior citizens are targeted to be completed by the end of June, provided that the supply of vaccines flow as anticipated. By end June we expect to have received 4,5 million doses of Pfizer and, 2 million doses of JnJ once released. The JnJ vaccine is still awaiting release from the Food and Drug Administration of America and we are constantly being updated by the JnJ global head office on progress in this regard. We hope to get finality this week.

Tomorrow, phase two will start as planned with Pfizer vaccines at 87 sites across the country- 83 in the public sector and 4 in the private sector. These sites will be pub-

lished on the SA Coronavirus Website, on I Choose Vaccination Bulletin and the provinces will also publish on platforms that they will announce shortly.

As we speak sms's are being dispatched with invitations to vaccinate tomorrow- over 7000 sms's are being dispatched to health care workers and 4 288 sms' to citizens 60 years and above. When you go to get vaccinated, you must take proof of ID such as your ID card or book, drivers licence or passport. People who belong to a medical aid scheme should also take their medical aid card or other details.

If you miss your vaccine appointment for any reason, you will be rescheduled, that is given another date and time to be vaccinated. If you miss three appointments, you will not be rescheduled again. However, you will still be on the system, and can ask to be scheduled again by phoning the COVID-19 hotline or visiting a registration site.

As a reminder, there are now 5 ways ways to register on EVDS:

1. online at www.vaccine.enroll.gov.za
2. using the whatsapp line 0600 123456
3. by sms- dial *134*832#
4. call the COVID-19 hotline 0800 029 999
5. You can use the new QR- simply scan and follow the prompts. The QR code will be published widely and can be found on sacoronavirus website or the National Department of Health Website.

All services are zero rated- that is you don't need airtime, data or money to use the services

Provinces, NDOH and GCIS core teams are conducting robust registration drives and we are seeing the numbers going up because of these initiatives and we encourage more of this work, which we commend. To date over 1,227 million senior citizens and over 914 000 health care workers have registered on EVDS. This means that over 2,1 million citizens have registered to date.

We recommend that as many people as possible register beforehand. For tomorrow we will not be able to accommodate walk-ins, however we will, going forward, be able to do so. The programme has been designed to avoid long queues. This is why it is important that as many people as possible register beforehand, and follow the instructions which they receive by SMS.

For those citizens living in old age homes, they will not receive an sms because the vaccines will be brought to them- they will be registered and vaccinated in their old age homes- we are targeting about 7 700 senior citizens living in 102 old age homes by the end of the week and 50 000 citizens documented in old age homes will be completed by the end of May. The Provinces will detail their respective outreach plans for Old Age Homes.

Fellow citizens, you will notice that the numbers will start fairly slowly over the course of the week then ramp up towards the end of the month. This is because we are starting off with a new vaccine we have never used before. We have learned from Sisonke that the first few days start slowly as vaccinators get used to the new vaccine then once operators are comfortable the turnover ramps up significantly. This is what we have planned around to allow us a few days to iron out any teething problems.

At this stage you cannot choose the vaccine. When you get vaccinated you will be informed which vaccine you are getting, and if a second dose is needed. You will receive the date, time and place of your second dose by SMS or a card will be issued to you on the day of vaccination if you do not have a phone. Most people will get their first and second doses at the same site.

The Pfizer vaccines are safe and work well, even against the variant that is dominant in this country. After 14 days, one starts to show markers of immunity. There is now very good literature to show that the interval between doses can be increased to 6 weeks and in the UK they showed good results after 3 months- we are getting advise from our experts who will guide us on the best interval- citizens must present on the date they are given for the second dose.

Many people have mild symptoms after vaccination. These include flu-like symptoms like mild fever, headache and tiredness, as well as redness, swelling and pain at the injection site. These generally disappear within 1 to 2 days, and can be managed at home with rest and paracetamol.

If you have more serious symptoms such as severe headache, severe abdominal pain or severe limb pain you should phone our Covid hotline, 0800 029 999 for advice, or seek care at your local clinic or hospital.

The vaccine will protect you from getting severe Covid disease or dying from COVID. However no vaccine works 100% and we also still do not know whether vaccination prevents transmission of the virus. It is therefore still important to follow the standard COVID-19 safety precautions to protect yourself and those around you.

When you have finished your vaccination course, you will receive an SMS indicating that you have been vaccinated as well as a vaccination card. Keep a record of your EVDS vaccination number.

We are still not certain how long the protection from the vaccine will last. Doctors and scientists are working to understand this better and we will keep the public informed of these details

I would like to thank the Director General of Health, MEC's and HOD's, officials in the national and provisional Departments of Health, private sector and business partners, sector leaders and trade unionists and their members, social partners and all those who have worked tirelessly to ensure that we are ready to start vaccinating tomorrow. We also know that we will be joined by sector leaders who will lead by example to build confidence in the vaccines themselves and the vaccination campaign.

Dr Zwelini Mkhize

Minister of Health