

Good morning Refilwe, kindly note that these responses comes from me directly. I will explain to you in due course.

QUESTIONS: Spotlight

- Can she give a provincial breakdown of the COVID-19 statistics. Where are the hotspots and problem areas in the province and specifically these areas?

- To date, 51 people have tested positive for Covid-19. Of these, 31 have recovered and one passed way, leaving us with 19 people with active Covid-19. There are nine people in Frances Baard, six in Pixley ka Seme and four in ZF Mgcawu. The MEC will be conducting her oversight visit to all the above mentioned district to support the district outreach response teams on the screening, tracing and testing of COVID-19 contacts.

- What has the department done so far to flatten the curve of COVID-19 transmission? What are the mitigation measures to spread the virus?

- Since the national lockdown, the department has intensified screening campaign to determine those eligible for testing on COVID-19. Public education has also played a major role in empowering communities about the importance of hand hygiene, social distancing and wearing of cloth masks in the public.

- How many tracer teams are in the province? How many are located at the hotspot areas? What do the tracer teams consist of?

- The department has over 760 tracers in the province and the number will gradually be increased based on the amount of workload.

- Since Sol Plaatje Municipality is the epicentre of the province with the highest COVID-19 cases, what's the department doing to ensure there are no community transmission that occurs. Why Sol Plaatje?

- The MEC has welcomed 11 Henry Reeve Medical Brigade (Cuban clinicians) last week, amongst them is an epidemiologist, a biostatistician, seven physicians and two Health technologists. The medical team comprise of 11 of the 217 Cuban doctors who arrived in the Country last month. The Henry Reeve Medical Brigade (Cuban Medical Brigade) are expected strengthen and support:

- The general epidemiological response to Covid-19 in the Northern Cape,

- The surveillance of COVID-19 in the Northern Cape,

- *The structures and the coordination thereof in each area,

- *The preparations for COVID-19 Surge,

- *The Infection and Prevention Control (IPC) measures in the Districts and the Province,

- *The quality assurance of the daily reports on the progress and management of the infected cases, and the number of deaths,

- *The isolation and quarantine measures that are in place,

- *The monitoring of progress made in our preventative strategies such as Mass screening and testing, Contact tracing

- *Clinical management of the COVID-19 Positive patient at home, in quarantine or isolation as well as hospital cases.

- *The preparation and maintenance of Clinical Health Technology for COVID-19

- *The training of Health Professionals on the management and response to epidemics

- *The Strengthening of our Primary Health Care system during the Pandemic through improvement of the community health model,

- *The development and maintenance of bio-statistics in the Northern Cape

- *The response to improvements on the management of the co-morbidities in the Northern Cape.

•What comorbidities people have in the province but not for specific individuals?

•Can I get a bit of background on the first death in the province. How did the 60-year-old contract the virus? What happened afterwards? Where was she admitted? She died after how many days since her admission?

- The MEC has since assign the department's clinical team to offer counseling and support to the bereaved family. The Department is commitment in upholding the principle of maintaining confidentiality of such cases, due to concern surrounding stigma and discrimination.

•The statement also mentions the deceased's travel history, where did she travel to and when? Was it during the period of the inter-provincial travel window that just passed?

- As it was made public by the family member, it has been confirmed that the deceased at time travelled to Eastern Cape.

•The Community Health Centre in Jan Kempdorp has been closed to further admissions and staff and patients had swabs taken over the weekend for testing. Can you please clarify why the centre was closed?

How long will it be closed? What are the results of the testings that were conducted to staff and patients? Are there other health facilities, that have been closed like the CHC in Jan Kempdorp?

- MEC Manopole conducted an oversight visit to Jan Kempdorp CHC last week, following its temporary closure as a result of a confirmed COVID-19 case. MEC Manopole met with the tracer team to receive an update in terms of contact tracing in the area. We can confirm that 253 people inclusive of the Staff and EMS personnel working at the Jan Kempdorp CHC were subjected to testing and MEC is pleased to report that we have received most of the laboratory reports back and all of them are negative. We are still awaiting the few outstanding reports so that we understand the full picture. The facility has been disinfected and is being prepared to resume for operations.

•How many community healthcare workers are working on COVID-19 screening in the province and how many tests can the NHLS labs in the province do per day?

- MEC has received assurance from the NHLS management team in the province that they have the necessary capacity to scale up testing in the province. To date, over 6994 tests on COVID-19 has been conducted in the province.

- How many ICU beds in the province have been set aside for COVID-19?

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- NICD figures shows that the Northern Cape has tested far fewer people per 100 000 than provinces like Gauteng and Western Cape. Why is this Is? Is the NC testing enough?

- In as far as NICD reports are concerned, the Northern Cape is on par when it comes to testing on COVID-19.

- In your statement, you say you've recognized the need for more testing and plan to test more people admitted to hospitals, as well as

their close contacts. Why didn't the department do this from the onset? Why only plan now?

- it's part of ensuring that our health care staff and patients must remain COVID-19 free and for swift action to be taken when a need arise.

- On the issue of quarantine, how many of quarantine sites are in the province and where? Also, whether under-utilised sections such as parts of the new Kimberley mental health hospital and the new De Aar hospital are being used for quarantine?

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- How many quarantine beds and isolation beds, respectively are in the province?

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- With the inter-provincial travel window that just passed, how many of the positive cases have been identified as imported from other provinces and what and how you're tracking these people?

- How is the department dealing with stigma. What is practically being done to address issues around stigma?

- Continuous health promotion to educate communities.

- Does the department have enough PPE for healthcare workers?"

-We can confirm that the department have sufficient PPEs on stock at the moment and we have placed more orders to ensure that no facility must run out of PPE.

- Health unions in the province have stated a few issues that they're not happy with, such as lack of PPE's, non-payment of danger allowance and fatigue due to many vacancies that are still not filled. Can I get your comment on all these three issues please.

- MEC has since met with Organised labour in the Department to assure them on her commitment to address all challenges confronting the healthcare services in the Northern Cape Department of Health. We can confirm that these matters have since received attention.

- Has there been any healthcare workers infected with COVID-19? If yes, how, when and what is the current state? If not, how ready are you when it happens?

- So far we have four healthcare workers that has been confirmed positive and all are in self-quarantine. They all have a travel history outside the province.

- The recent situation at Robert Sobukwe Hospital where a Doctor tested positive to COVID-19 and health workers picketing on the matter stating they don't feel safe going back to work. What's comment on the picketing? How did this Doctor get infected? Has the department already conducted his contacts after the results came out and how many were they, who were they (patients, nurses) and how many tested positive? From those who tested positive, how many are health care workers and how patients and where have they been placed?

- At Robert Mangaliso Sobukwe Hospital the tracing and testing teams have been hard at work. So far 46 staff have been tested and placed in quarantine, including 30 nurses, 8 doctors, 5 porters, 2 cleaners and 1 administration staff member. The MEC thanked the Outbreak Response Teams, all healthcare staff and the community for its support and understanding during these challenging times.

- The province has the lowest numbers of COVID-19 in the country, what do you think is the reason?

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- The province is a drought stricken area – how is the department managing the scarcity against the need for hygiene to curb transmission? What are you doing to make it possible for people to practice hygiene?