



social development

Department:
Social Development
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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COMMENTS REGARDING THE RISING INFECTIONS IN RESIDENTIAL FACILITIES

1. Please state your full name and position.

Ms Conny Nxumalo

Deputy Director – General: Welfare Services

2. To date how many Residential Care Facilities for Older Persons in South Africa have reported COVID-19 infections within the facility?

69 (Sixty-nine)

3. I would like a provincial break down of this info.

(I am aware that much of this information is sensitive or confidential, so I am only looking for general information about how many care facilities have been impacted). If your department does not have this info, who should I contact with regards to this?

-How many COVID-19 infections within Residential Care Facilities for older persons have been reported to/ recorded by your Department? I would like a provincial breakdown for this also.

INFECTIONS IN RESIDENTIAL CARE FACILITIES

PROVINCE	AFFECTED RESIDENTIAL FACILITIES	NUMBER OF INFECTED OLDER PERSONS		NUMBER OF FATALITIES	
		RESIDENTS	STAFF MEMBERS	RESIDENTS	STAFF MEMBERS
Eastern Cape	3	9	15	2	0
Free State	1	1	0	0	0

PROVINCE	AFFECTED RESIDENTIAL FACILITIES	NUMBER OF INFECTED OLDER PERSONS		NUMBER OF FATALITIES	
		RESIDENTS	STAFF MEMBERS	RESIDENTS	STAFF MEMBERS
Gauteng	17	70	52	5	0
Kwa-Zulu Natal	2	1	0	1	0
Limpopo	0	0	0	0	0
Mpumalanga	4	1	0	0	0
Northern Cape	0	0	0	0	0
North West	3	10	9	0	0
Western Cape	39	145	207	27	0
Total	69	237	283	35	0

4. -Has the Department identified a cause/causes for the rise in COVID-19 infections in these facilities, for example, are safety measures not being followed? Or should more be done beyond the safety measures? If so please outline the cause/causes

No. The Department has not identified any specific cause/s of the COVID-19 infections in residential facilities. The National Department of Social Development works closely with the National Department of Health and its provincial departments to ensure the effective management of COVID -19 infections and responsiveness to the Regulations and Protocols guiding all COVID-19 related process.

The Department is confident that staff members in these facilities do adhere to the safety measures. They were trained and are continuously empowered and supported by both the Departments of Social Development and Health. Among others, the following work was done to facilitate COVID-19 management plans across Residential Care Facilities for Older Persons.

4.1 Development of guidelines for residential facilities to protect Older Persons from COVID-19 infections:

The Department of Social Development (Department) developed guidelines on measures to be put in place for the protection of all Older Persons in Residential Care Facilities for Older Persons. This included how these residential facilities should deal with admissions and release of Older Persons, hygiene protocols, visitations, COVID-19 guidelines, the use of PPEs and services to be provided to Older Persons. Provinces have been reporting in this regard.

4.2 Training of management in residential facilities

A team of Professional Nurses employed in Residential Care Facilities for Older Persons was trained in April 2020. The table below shows the numbers per province in terms of the teams of nurses that were trained:

Province	Number of People Trained
Eastern Cape	9
Free State & Northern Cape	10
Gauteng	60
Western Cape	17
KZN	17
Limpopo	28
North West	46
Mpumalanga	12
Total	199

The above mentioned training was conducted by the Department of Health. It included all key information about COVID-19 including screening and testing processes and protocols as prescribed by the World Health Organisation (WHO). Infection prevention/control is the day to day activity in the facilities with emphasis on COVID-19.

Currently, the management representatives of residential facilities are trained on how to manage the pandemic in the facilities. The necessary

systems that need to be put in place were developed. Those that were developed are being reviewed and strengthened. Once all Provinces have been trained, a statistical report and evaluation will be drawn.

Monitoring tools are developed, implemented and reviewed.

4.3 Tracking of COVID-19 infections and deaths of Older Persons due to COVID-19

Provinces are reporting on COVID-19 infections, fatalities and types of interventions made during and after the incidents. Where support is needed, the National Department in partnership with its counterparts, assist. The aim is to curb further infections by containing the spread and facilitate recoveries.

4.4 Provision of PPEs in residential facilities for Older Persons

To date the following PPE's have been procured by the Department both Provincial and National DSD:

- 33 652 Hand sanitisers
- 11 292 Disposable gloves
- 7 952 Masks
- 5 000 Face shields
- 618 Disposable aprons
- 48 000 Anti-septic bars of soap
- 48 000 Wet wipes

4.5 Strengthening of communication between residential care facilities and the Department

The Department provided MTN communication systems in bulk. This was aimed at facilitating communication between the NGOs and the Departments of Social Development and Health (DOH).

4.6 Protocols to be adhered to during lockdown and COVID-19

The Department together with the DOH are monitoring compliance of residential facilities with prescribed protocols. As mentioned above, there is

ongoing review of protocols to assist provinces and Residential Care Facilities for Older Persons to respond effectively to the COVID-19 pandemic in various spaces of the country.

4.7 Public-private partnerships developed to support residential facilities

A number of partnerships have been established since the outbreak of the pandemic under discussion. Among others the following have been mentioned in this response:

- Department of Health (DOH)
- National Institute for Communicable Diseases (NICD)
- FNB and National Institute Community Development (NICDAM)
- MTN
- Right to Care (RTC) etc.

Additionally, the Deputy Minister of the Department of Social Development has been on ongoing COVID-19 assessment visits to DSD run facilities, including old age homes, but also visiting communities where older persons were targeted. Various PPEs, food parcels, grocery items vegetables have also been distributed during these visits. The said items were sourced from various partners to enable her to deliver on this gesture,

All the above aimed at assisting residential facilities to manage the scourge of COVID-19.

5-What protocols and safety measures have been advised to these facilities to prevent and/or deal with COVID-19 infections? Please outline these in detail

Several Directives have been issued to assist residential facilities to respond to the current pandemic. The following are key among others:

- Directions issued in terms of Regulation 10(5) of the Regulations made under section 27(2) of the Disaster Management Act, 2002 (Act No. 57 of 2002): measures to prevent and combat the spread of COVID-19.
- Protocols on the management of COVID-19 received from DOH prescribed by WHO which deal with the general safety measures, identification of signs and symptoms and the management thereof, infection control, referral systems, testing and screening, COVID-19 management systems and others.

6-Given the rise in infections, are the safety measures outlined by your department still considered adequate? If so why?

Yes, the Department facilitates the implementation of the safety measures as they are the basic and key day to day practices. However, all the interventions mentioned above and more continue to be implemented with partners and strengthened from the monitoring processes informed by daily, weekly and monthly reports from Provinces. As discussed with Provinces during the reporting phases e.g. Western Cape, among others the following are some of the areas dealt with on an ongoing basis:

- Monitor the implementation of protocols from DSD and DOH, both for prevention measures and for rapid and effective response to positive cases.
- Encourage Provinces and identified residential facilities to participate and respond to the NICD surveillance processes and the RTC interventions and recommendations, if any;
- Identify training needs, support needed and monitor the situations in residential care facilities
- Provision of PPEs including sanitizers which get depleted quickly across facilities
- Rapid response with isolation, screening and testing of residents and staff where potential cases are identified
- Intervention where the facility cannot respond adequately or manage an outbreak and others.

7.-What steps have been taken by your Department to improve the response to COVID-19 infections, particularly in relation to both the staff and residents?

- Created a database of the contact personnel in the Departments of Social Development and Health with the view to improve and facilitate rapid response.
- Formed partnerships to respond timeously e.g. facilitate hospitalization where the condition of an infected resident or staff member requires it, report an outbreak so as to manage it effectively and efficiently
- Ongoing monitoring of management of waste processes
- Established public-private partnerships with the view to manage and respond effectively and efficiently to Covid-19.

Among others, the following key partnerships are in place

Online Training

- DSD in partnership with FNB, contracted CHAPS to conduct online training for 89 residential facilities. Additionally, FNB has pledged PPEs to Residential Care Facilities and hygienic packs for older persons across communities.
- KZN-ABH received the training on the 11th June 2020 and 6 facilities in Gauteng on the 25-26 and 29-30 June 2020.

Face to face training

- Social Development in partnership with NICDAM is currently conducting face to face training for Residential Care Facilities that cannot benefit from the online training.
- The currently targeted facilities are mainly from the disadvantaged communities with less resources. Thus far, training is being concluded in the last region of Gauteng province. Upon conclusion of training activities in this region, roll out targeting all provinces will commence.
- To date, training was conducted for Johannesburg, Tshwane, Ekurhuleni and Sedibeng.
- This is an ongoing training and will be rolled out to all Provinces and Districts.

8-In line with the current protocols or safety measures when dealing with COVID-19 infections, how are the families of residents who test positive for COVID-19 being

accommodated? Are they notified, are they allowed to see their loved ones, are they updated regularly by the facilities etc.

It has always been the policy of the Department and residential facilities alike, to ensure that Older Persons in residential facilities are in constant contact with their families. The standard application form is designed in such a way that families can access see the facility as a second home for their parents/Older Persons.

With the COVID19 pandemic, the Department, through the implementation of Regulations and Protocols as stipulated earlier, limited access to Residential Care Facilities to ensure the protection and safety of older persons have been implemented since Level 5 to Level 4, to date.

In the event an Older Persons becomes ill, family members are informed. of the type of illness, the actions taken in order to respond to the plight of the resident and they are kept abreast with the developments / progress.

If family members are able to visit their Older Person, they are allowed to do so; if they can't e.g. in another province or country they are at liberty to call the facility and get the status of the health of their parent/relative.

During the COVID-19 pandemic however, no visitors are allowed in residential facilities. Families are allowed to phone, make video calls or send messages to their parents or loved ones in the residential facilities. This is one of the methods to ensure continued contact of residents with their Older Persons. However, with the country moving to Lockdown Level 3, a number of the Residential Care Facilities have started innovatively allowing limited visitation of family members, whilst continuing to limit access to the facilities holistically.

9-Have any changes been made to these safety measures? Or are there any plans to improve the safety measures? If so what are they? If not, why?

Currently safety measures are in place and continue to be monitored. As mentioned above, the plans are already being implemented with the partnerships

with the stakeholders, focussing largely and mainly on improvements of safety measure and key are the following:

- Prioritization of facilities (hotspots) whose concerns have already been received, relating to infections and inability of facilities to control such, leading to deaths
- Screening and testing challenges
- Identification of risk for infection at facilities especially among those that fall within hotspots.
- De-contamination of facilities
- Necessary support verbalised or identified during the monitoring process
- Testing when screening dictates such
- Need for improved surveillance to track, trace and comprehensively manage both workers and residents at facilities who are infected
- Quarantining of patients
- Training of management, staff across all levels and categories as well as residents
- Support for those older persons who have been beneficiaries of services and programmes of Community Based Care and Support Service Centres, (CBCSSCs), which are currently closed as a result of COVID 19.
- Need to enhance monitoring on access to PPEs and identification of resources when access was constrained.

Protocols have been established. However, responses are not static to ensure relevance in terms of the Department's responses to the outbreak of the COVID-19. Thus the responses are as versatile as the need demands and according to available resources and national and provincial plans and protocols.

10-What support has your department provided to these Residential Care Facilities since the start of the COVID-19 outbreak in South Africa?

All of the above mentioned interventions and partnerships are aimed at providing support to Residential Care Facilities nationally.

11-Is there anything else you would like to add?

No