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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 – PROVINCES AND GOVERNMENT
DEPARTMENTS NEXT STEPS – 26th JULY 2021**

Several significant changes have been approved that will impact on the vaccine roll-out in the next month or two.

1. The **general public age cohort roll-out of vaccinations** has been extended:
 - 1.1 The registration and vaccination of the public **over 60 years of age** is still the primary target and every effort must be made to focus on this group of people,
 - 1.2 The second target is those between **50 and 59 years of age**,
 - 1.3 The cohort from **35 to 49 years** began registration on 15th July and was due to start vaccination on 01 August 2021, however the response was overwhelming, and many have already arrived for vaccination despite there being no active scheduling on EVDS for this cohort yet.
 - 1.4 EVDS will commence scheduling people between **35 to 49 years** from 01 August as originally planned but this cohort is likely to prefer walk-ins
 - 1.5 The President has announced that the final cohort from **18 years to 34 years** will be eligible for vaccination on 01 September 2021.

2. Further decisions were taken at the Inter-Ministerial Committee meeting held on 25th July which need to be read together with this roll-out announcement:
 - 2.1 There will be **no further prioritisation of essential public services or sectors** since the opening of the age groups will make everyone over 18 eligible for vaccination.
 - 2.2 Those services projects that had commenced will be completed; this includes:
 - 2.2.1 Dept of Defence and Military Veterans
 - 2.2.2 South African Police Service (including IPID)
 - 2.2.3 Dept Correctional Services (including the inmates)
 - 2.2.4 Social Development Sector (incl ECD/SASSA)
 - 2.2.5 Home Affairs

- 2.2.6 SARS
- 2.2.7 Dept of Justice
- 2.2.8 National Prosecuting Authority
- 2.2.9 Media (coordinated by GCIS)
- 2.2.10 Higher Education sector (coordinated by Higher Health)

- 2.2.11 **Basic Education Sector** is technically complete and any 'mop-up' of people who still need vaccination must go through the national vaccination programme.
- 2.2.12 **Health sector** is also technically complete and any 'mop-up' of people who still need vaccination may go through the V4HCW registration until the end of July and thereafter must go through the national vaccination programme.

- 2.3 **Workplace vaccination through Occupational Health Services (OHS)** has thus far been restricted to vaccinating according to the national programme age cohorts but this **limitation has been lifted** in advance of the opening of the last population cohort to include all workers at a workplace over 18 years of age with immediate effect.
 - 2.3.1 The objective is to allow workplace OHS to complete their workforce vaccination as quickly as is possible in the hope that some of the OHS capacity will be made available for the population vaccination programme thereafter.

- 2.4 DPSA will still play a role in facilitating and encouraging the **remaining government departments** to have their personnel vaccinated but GEMS and their potential service providers will no longer be involved so this responsibility will fall to the provincial DOHs and the private providers.

- 3. **EVDS will continue to schedule:**
 - 3.1 first dose appointments for all eligible age groups,
 - 3.2 second doses for those who have received first doses of Pfizer vaccine since 17th May 2021,
 - 3.3 both uninsured and insured people to both public and private sites based only on the nearest site to their declared sub-area of their residence, so do not turn anyone away based on their medical aid status.
 - 3.4 A self-booking system is under development which will allow people to schedule their own appointments at the sites with active scheduling implemented. (This is NOT yet operational and details will be announced once it has been developed, tested and operationalised.)
 - 3.5 The system that has been established for evaluation and authorisation of 'Special Cases' for the processing of vaccinations in respect of **travel requests** for students studying abroad, people travelling for international sporting events, medical care and for people working abroad is no longer processing applications for people over 35 years of age and will cease on 31st August 2021 whereafter everyone will be eligible for managing their own vaccination appointments.

- 4. **Walk-ins are likely to dominate the demand for vaccination**, especially in the younger age cohorts.
 - 4.1 All vaccination sites in both the public and private sector are obliged to make every effort to vaccinate every person who is eligible to be vaccinated;

- 4.1.1 By pro-active outreach and loud hailing using mobiles, pop-ups and door to door mobilisation,
- 4.1.2 Vaccinating those who present at the site to be vaccinated.
- 4.2 Priority must be given to:
 - 4.2.1 people who are scheduled (have appointments) to be vaccinated on a particular day,
 - 4.2.2 people over 60 years of age and the disabled,
 - 4.2.3 followed by people between 50 and 59 years of age, then
 - 4.2.4 people 35 to 49 years, and then
 - 4.2.5 people 18 to 34 years of age.
- 4.3 Every vaccination site, public and private, must have a pro-active plan to safely manage the queues at sites
- 4.4 It is acknowledged that sites experience different environments and that plans will be specific to each site.

5. Regarding **vaccination sites**:

- 5.1 The NDOH working group with B4SA is analysing and planning the most pressing needs for additional sites to cover underserved areas.
 - 5.1.1 The private sector providers are working with NDOH to identify where they have potential capacity to bring additional private sites into operation,
 - 5.1.2 The NDOH will communicate these developments to PDOHs and will discuss where the PDOHs have potential capacity in the remaining gaps.
- 5.2 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 improve coverage to maintain reasonable equity in access to vaccination.

6. Regarding **reimbursement**:

- 6.1 The contracts governing the relationship between the private parties and the NDOH have been finalised,
- 6.2 The contracts governing the relationship between the PDOHs and the NDOH have yet to be finalised through the “PDOH and NDOH Back-to-Back and Concurrence Agreements”.
- 6.3 NDOH has commenced the establishment of the Vaccination Project Finance Unit with support from a donor partner for project management set-up.
- 6.4 A process for reconciling and verifying medical scheme membership of people vaccinated has been identified and will form a part of this reconciliation process.

7. Regarding **vaccines**:

- 7.1 The vaccination week of Monday 26th July to Sunday 31st July 2021 may see vaccine shortages in places as new stock will not be in the ‘pipeline’ until late in the week:
 - 7.1.1 Pfizer routine delivery for the week has arrived on Sunday night 25th July but will need NCL release and distribution before it is available for use later this week,
 - 7.1.2 Johnson and Johnson (J&J) routine deliveries will commence on Monday night 26th July 2021 and will also need NCL release and distribution before it is available for use later this week, and
 - 7.1.3 Pfizer donation from the USA through Covax will arrive towards the end of this week and will only be in the distribution system after 01st August 2021.

- 7.2 In total over 8m vaccine doses will arrive and enter the distribution system this week, sufficient 20 vaccination days at the present rate, during which time further deliveries are expected.
- 7.3 The logistics team is in the process of reallocating J&J short expiry vaccine doses to the population programme to ensure that they are all used prior to 11th August 2021 when they are due to expire:
- 7.4 J&J vaccines will be preferentially allocated to:
- 7.4.1 the SASSA pension pay-out project sites and mobiles, and
- 7.4.2 rural and difficult to reach communities where returning for second vaccinations is difficult.



DR NICHOLAS CRISP (DEPUTY DIRECTOR GENERAL: NHI)

**For DR SSS BUTHELEZI
DIRECTOR-GENERAL: HEALTH
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