



Office of the Premier

North West Provincial Government
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



3rd Floor, Ga-Rona Building
Private Bag X129,
MMABATHO
2735

COMMUNICATION SERVICES

Tel: +27 (18) 388-3705
Fax: +27(18) 388- 3157
E-mail:BMohlakoana@nwpg.gov.za

Media Statement

Date: Monday, 17 August, 2020

Ladies and gentlemen of the media,
Members of the Provincial Coronavirus Command Council,
Citizens of the North West Province,
Good morning.

Ke ema fa pele ga lona mosong ono, go neelana ka pegelo mabapi le maiteko, mananeo le diphitlhelelo tsa rona re le puso go lwantsha go anama ga mogare wa COVID-19, go baagi ba Profense ya rona ya North West gammogo le Afrika Borwa ka bophara.

Ke eme fano jaaka ke le Modulasetilo wa lekgotla-tsamaiso leo le theilweng go samagana le go lwantsha kanamo ya Coronavirus mo Profenseng; leo le itsegeng jaaka Provincial Coronavirus Command Council, ebile ke patilwe ke maloko a lekgotla-tsamaiso leo ka se sebaka.

A lot of work has been put into our Provincial Risk Adjusted COVID-19 Lockdown Strategy since the State of National Disaster was declared by President Cyril Ramaphosa and the National Coronavirus Command Council on March 25 this year and indeed, it has been a learning curve for most of, if not all of us.

By last night, the North West Province had registered 23 250 confirmed COVID-19 cases since outbreak of the pandemic in this country, of which 155 were new cases, with 8 076 of those still active, 14 980 recoveries and 194 recorded deaths.

We have learnt and observed that, the rate of infections in the Country as well as in the Province are dropping, with an increase in the rate of recoveries.

Over a week ago, I issued a directive to all Provincial Government Departments to submit reports relating to all procurement related to COVID-19 to my office and the Provincial Treasury.

This was in response to President Cyril Ramaphosa's pronouncement on Government's efforts to root out and deal with alleged corruption in all COVID-19 procurement in all state institutions – from government departments to municipalities as well as state owned entities.

Let me be clear from the onset that the North West Provincial Government will fully cooperate with the Cabinet Committee announced by the President to deal with the alleged corruption of in all COVID-19 procurement.

We are also cooperating, in full, with the Special Investigative Unit (SIU) in line with the proclamation by the President allowing them to conduct wide-ranging investigations into alleged and suspected acts of corruption in COVID-19 related procurement.

It is our belief that theft and corruption should not be given space to thrive anywhere, anytime, anyhow and to quote from an article in the Daily Maverick a week ago, "to steal from the people is purely criminal but to steal from the people during a pandemic is a crime against humanity".

Ladies and gentlemen, the total amount spent on the procured COVID-19 related items, including PPE, by the North West Provincial Government from the beginning of April this year to August stands at R124 228 038 (One Hundred and Twenty-Four Million, Two Hundred and Twenty-Eight Thousand and Thirty-Eight Rands).

This amount is from an expenditure report that was presented by Provincial Treasury to the Provincial Coronavirus Command Council; which, in turn, provided us with consolidated spending information that had been received from Provincial Government Departments as at 06 August 2020.

The expenditure will continuously increase over the period of our intervention as the departments consistently update their records after capturing all payments in the system.

While departments such as Health, Education, and Social Development incurred COVID-19 spending on social responsibility, the majority of departments are mainly spending for internal interventions to curb the spread of the disease.

The Department of Health, which is the lead department in the implementation the Provincial COVID-19 Response Plan, has an expenditure of R65million to date; the majority of which has been directed to healthcare workers and patients in the fight against COVID-19.

The Department of Education comes in as being the second highest with R32,669 million spent mostly on temperature scanners and masks for learners, educators and non-educators as well as other COVID-19 related items; in an effort to ensure that teaching and learning would not be compromised in the fight against the spread of the pandemic.

The Department of Social Development has to date spent R9.257million on Social Relief of Distress, R8.7million on food parcels and R490 000 on dignity packs.

As part of our continued drive to ensure compliance and strict adherence to the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA), while also ensuring accountability, the Provincial Internal Audit is currently performing audits on all COVID-19 related procurement by departments, including but not limited to PPE.

The audits focuses amongst others on whether departments assessed and managed the risk with regard to this expenditure and whether the prescribed procurement processes were followed, whether prices paid are market related and in accordance with price determinations and whether the quality of goods received complied with the prescribed standards.

Where there are transgressions, necessary consequence management action will be taken and cooperation will be provided to appointed law enforcement agencies.

The audits are at an advanced stage of execution and the final reports are expected to be issued before the 31st of August 2020.

The Provincial Command Council (PCC) has agreed to the publication of COVID-19 expenditure before the end of today in support of transparency principles subject to confidentiality provisions attached to the contracting between government departments and service providers.

The Office of the Premier and Provincial Treasury will be responsible for publishing that information.

The publication will afford the public to hold the province accountable for the public funds it has been entrusted with to further open government to scrutiny to check if equal value has been derived on spent resources.

Regarding the municipalities, the Provincial Treasury working with Office of the Premier, SALGA and the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, will be working with all municipalities to ensure publication of the similar information.

It is common cause that municipalities and the Province are not using the same financial system, therefore verification of information before publication is quite important. Government is aware about the reports that are in the public domain regarding the COVID-19 expenditure; in particular the Ngaka Modiri Molema District and JB Marks Local Municipalities.

The expenditure matters relating to the two municipalities are currently with the law enforcement agencies and we are encouraged about the manner in which the law enforcement agencies are dealing with the matters.

As indicated before, Government is committed to uproot corruption and will do everything to support efforts by the enforcement agencies.

It is now common knowledge that the National Coronavirus Command Council has taken a decision to move our Risk Adjusted COVID-19 Lockdown Strategy from Level 3 to Level 2, effectively from midnight today and we will be following suit in ensuring that our Provincial Risk Adjusted COVID-19 Lockdown Strategy and Response Plan is in line with that decision.

However, the province is experiencing rising numbers of infections as well as fatalities in some areas; there is a sharp increase of positive cases in the Ngaka Modiri Molema and Dr Ruth Segomotsi Mompati Districts.

In response, we have adopted the ward-based strategy as pronounced by the President, in order to flatten the curve and curb the increase of new cases. The Department of Health is working together with the Department of Community Safety and Transport Management to increase awareness in the Freight and Logistics industry, which experienced an increase of positive cases amongst long haul truck drivers and in the process contributing to the possibility of an increase in cross border infections.

There has also been an increase of positive cases in the public service and private sector, and this has contributed to a halt in service delivery in some quarters and disruptions in the provision of basic services.

We will continue to perform surveillance for COVID-19 in the North West Province through the district and provincial nerve centres; which comprise of representatives from various health programmes such as Communicable Disease Control (CDC), non-communicable diseases, health promotion, environmental health, and supported by the NICD Provincial Epidemiologist.

As at end of last week, the mining industry in the North West as well as big business had recorded 4 563 confirmed COVID-19 cases with 3 647 recoveries.

We have, since the outbreak of the pandemic, managed to forge partnership with the Minerals Council of South Africa, which includes all the mining houses conducting business in this province and all other big business across the province; so as to pull together all the available resources at our disposal towards the fight against the spread of COVID-19.

The most notable of these partnerships is the progress made in the Bojanala district – which remains a hot spot district - through the Rustenburg Health Forum (RHF) that made up of Bojanala District Health Department and mining houses.

Among the milestones recorded in this regard are;

- The setting up of quarantine facilities, a field hospital, non-clinical isolation sites and hospital beds for treatment
- Joint contact tracing with the Department of Health
- Support for testing
- Support with provision of PPEs
- Data sharing through the District nerve centres and Provincial OHS committee with mines and big industries
- Return to work plans are shared with and monitored by the Department of Health.

As we move from Risk Adjusted Level 3 to Level 2, we will be continuing with the increased return to work and phasing-in of government employees so as to ensure that service delivery continues while the fight against the spread of COVID-19 is sustained as well as ensuring that the workspaces are compliant with all the stipulated COVID-19 safety regulations.

We are putting in place proper governance measures that will ensure the effective control measures that will assist departments to assist government in mitigating the spread of COVID-19 in the public service.

These measures include appointment of the Compliance Officer, reviewing Steering Committee mandate, review of Occupational Health and Safety Policy and risk assessment, development of phased increase of employees returning to work, guidelines and protocols, Standard Operating Procedures.

We are pleased with the progress made in terms of learners and teachers returning to school; however, we are also experiencing challenges in the education space such as communities closing some schools to fears of contracting COVID-19, learners disrupting schooling under the auspices of COSAS, management of teachers with comorbidities, replacement of teachers with comorbidities and decontamination of schools, just to name a few.

We are continuing to engage with sector players in the education sector to ensure that we do all we can in our might to salvage the academic year while ensuring the safety of our teachers and learners in the fight against the pandemic.

We are concerned about the continued incidents of Gender Based Violence across the province and wish to call upon our people – especially males – to work together with us to rid society of this second pandemic; one GBV case is one too many.

A re direng mmogo go fokotsa go sotlwa ga basadi le bana; gone fa re dira mmogo re ka fenyha seo ebile re ka kgona go emisa go anama ga mogare wa COVID-19.

ENDS

Issued by:

Office of the Premier

North West Provincial Government

Enquiries:

Vuyisile Ngesi

Spokesperson

Office of the Premier

061 056 3623

vngesi@nwpg.gov.za

vngesi@gmail.com