

# SIYABONGA TO ALL HEALTH WORKERS IN KWAZULU-NATAL:

# WE ACKNOWLEDGE YOUR EFFORTS AND APPRECIATE YOUR VITAL ROLE IN THE FIGHT AGAINST COVID-19



## COVID-19 has brought about challenges for the South African healthcare system, in both the public and private sectors.

The rising number of positive COVID – 19 cases and deaths has placed a massive strain on material resources, as well as on our most valuable resource: our healthcare workers.

Health workers are human, too.

No amount of experience, skills or resilience can ever be enough to render you totally immune from the anxiety of possible infection, or the

psychological trauma of losing patients.

But despite this, so many of you get up and go to work every day to fight gallantly against COVID – 19 in the service of your countrymen and women.

We are taking a moment to thank all of you throughout the value chain of health, from the frontline staff in the medical field - including nurses, doctors, allied healthcare workers, support staff, general workers

and officials in our District Offices and at Head Office, to Community Care Givers and all Community-Based Teams on the ground.

We recognise your efforts. We appreciate you. We know we would never win this war without you.

To all those health workers who fell along the way and became casualties of COVID - 19, we will always remember you as our heroes. May your souls rest in peace, and your families be comforted.

To all those who continue to soldier on, we urge you to remain strong and follow the precautions. Do not let your guard down.

Please make sure you properly use available Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) provided to you.

Always remember: any person or location within the workplace, in public, or at home, is at all times potentially infectious. We have begun putting up safety notices at our healthcare facilities. Please abide by them.

If you are battling to cope or feel too stressed, speak to your supervisor about how to access our Occupational Safety and Employee Wellness programmes.

Together, we can conquer COVID - 19

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# EDENDALE HOSPITAL SURPRISE VISIT:

## MEC SIMELANE-ZULU CALLS FOR UNITY IN THE FIGHT AGAINST COVID-19



**FOLLOWING** the disruption of normal operations at several hospitals last week, KwaZulu-Natal Health MEC Ms Nomagugu Simelane-Zulu paid a surprise visit to Edendale Hospital to inspect Personal Protective Equipment supplies - and vowed to follow this up with more similar visits at other facilities.

During the visit, the MEC was pleased with the sufficient PPE stock levels. She made an important call: co-operation and communication between organised labour and management of health facilities needs to improve. The MEC paid tribute to all

healthcare workers involved in the fight against COVID – 19 across the province, and pointed out that it was important to ensure that these valued foot soldiers have all their essential tools, at hospital and ward level, in order to save lives.

"We are aware of protests in our different facilities. We were told

that the majority of the protests related to a reported lack of PPE. I then decided that I must visit those facilities... and satisfy myself about what the issues are.

"However, what we've realised is that there seems to be a disjuncture between the organised labour and the management in that they are not communicating properly." It also emerged during the MEC's visit that one of the challenges at Edendale is that they do not have an occupational safety committee.

She urged management to change this with immediate effect, adding that such structures are vital in

strengthening governance and oversight.

"We've agreed that the committee will be established before the end of this week, and from next week it will operate properly. Two representatives from organised labour are going to be part of it.

"It is very important that management within the Department, including in our facilities, works together with organised labour because they are our partners, and it does not help anyone to work in silos and to fight each other. What's important is that we work together to fight this particular virus."

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# IMMEDIATE COMPLIANCE TO LEVEL 3 NEW MEASURES

On Sunday night president Cyril Ramaphosa announced that the country would remain at the third level of the national lockdown until 15 August 2020. In his address, he announced new additional regulations which required immediate compliance from 13 July 2020 to combat the rampant spread of the COVID-19 virus while the world waits for a vaccine to be developed.



PHOTO: Mail &amp; Guardian

## Alcohol Suspension

“As we head towards the peak of infections, it is vital that we do not burden our clinics and hospitals with alcohol-related injuries that could have been avoided. This is a fight to save every life, and we need to save every bed. We have therefore decided that to conserve hospital capacity, the sale, dispensing and distribution of alcohol will be suspended with immediate effect.

There is now clear evidence that the resumption of alcohol sales has resulted in substantial pressure being put on hospitals, including trauma and ICU units, due to motor vehicle accidents, violence and related trauma.”

## National Curfew

“Most of these and other trauma injuries occur at night. Therefore, as an additional measure to reduce the pressure on hospitals, a curfew will be put in place between the hours of 9pm and 4am. Apart from people who need to travel to and from work or who need to seek urgent medical or other assistance during this time, everyone will be required to remain at home.”

**STAY  
HOME**

**SAVE SOUTH AFRICA**



### Wearing masks in public places is mandatory

Employers, business owners and managers are legally obliged to ensure compliance



### Taxis must have windows open during all journeys

Taxis may have 100% occupancy on local trips and no more than 70% on long distance trips



### Sale of alcohol is suspended

This is to prevent hospital capacity being overwhelmed during the peak of infections



### Curfew is reinstated between 9pm and 4am

This excludes permitted workers or for urgent medical assistance

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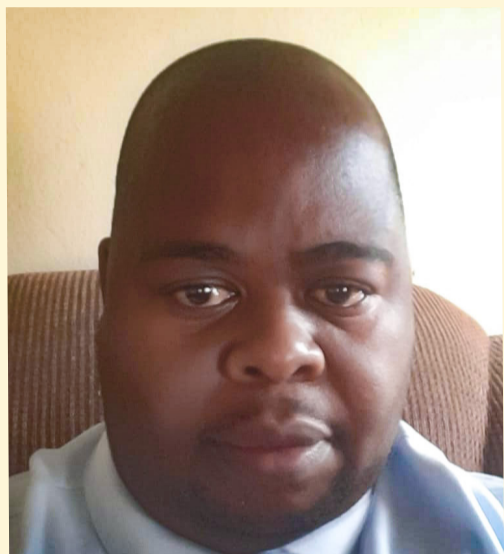
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# COVID-19 RECOVERY TESTIMONIES

Health Chat Bulletin caught up with some people who have recovered from COVID-19 to narrate their journey from the very onset of getting an infection right through to finally defeating the virus.



**MTHOKOZISI CHIYA,  
KWAMASHU**

I'm 41 years old and I live in KwaMashu. On the 16th June 2020 I had flu when the days progressed I had fever and a terrible headache. On the 20th June I decided to visit the Doctor because I was in a horrible state. The Doctor gave me an injection and medication for flu then I felt better and went back home. On 22nd of June the flu came back much stronger than before, I started coughing and I lost my sense of taste. My chest was congested and I couldn't breathe. On 23rd of June I went to the clinic for a check-up, they ran some tests and found that I am diabetic. The nurse who was screening me asked me what was wrong with me and I told her that I had flu and I could not breathe properly.

On the 24th June the flu was worse, I could not breathe. On the same day, I decided to go to another Doctor in New Lands East at that time I was coughing very bad, I could not talk because of shortness of breath. The Doctor gave me a letter to go to the Hospital because I had COVID-19 symptoms and I went to Addington Hospital.

At Addington hospital I had tests and X-Rays done and I was admitted on the same day. After 2 days which was the 26 June

the results came back positive. I couldn't believe, it felt like it was the end of the world for me. I was taken to an isolation ward. I was treated there for 14 days until I recovered.

I would like to thank the staff and management of Addington hospital for taking care of me and saving my life. The passion and care they showed me was overwhelming. My wife and my family were also very supportive. I would also like to thank my colleagues who were very supportive. I went back home on the 9th July 2020 and quarantined for 7 days.

I would like to warn the public out there that they need to adhere to the precautions that are in place. People need to wear their masks at all the times, wash their hands regularly with soap and water or use hand sanitiser. They need to keep social distancing at least 2metres away from each other. Good people this is real, I don't wish for anyone to feel the agony I went through!!!



**BIYELA BULELWA**

I want to share with you a little bit about my professional background and how things transpired leading up to me having had my first COVID-19 test.

I am employed by the Department of Health at General Justice Gizenga Memorial Hospital as a Pharmacy Manager. At one of our regular EAP sessions Pharmacy staff requested to be prioritised for COVID-19 testing due to concerns about our inability to comply to social distancing at the pharmacy.

The recommendations from the EAP session were presented in our institutional JOC meeting and the MOPD Clinical HOP offered tests to all our Pharmacy staff. During this time there were reported cases of patients testing positive within the hospital. We immediately compiled a list of 3 groups of staff so that we could implement a shift system to separate the pharmacy staff.

The shift system was implemented on 7 May 2020. All staff on leave were recalled to return to the hospital for testing.

After being tested on 06 May 2020, my results returned. I was positive for COVID-19. I was shocked but not overwhelmed. I accepted the results and I was grateful that at least I still did not have symptoms, which meant my immune system was fighting the infection.

I notified my colleagues, supervisors and line managers of the outcome of my results, as well as my partner, a few of friends and my family.

My sister and I discussed my isolation arrangements, including the usage of the bathroom and kitchen to minimise my movements to be limited to the bedroom most of the time. We even discussed details such as the separation of cutlery and preparation of food.

I realized within these unnatural arrangements, I needed to normalize my life as much as possible and not dwell too much on the negative thoughts about the fact that I tested positive. I encouraged my sister and my partner's family members to get

tested. Thankfully, my partner and his family were tested all tested negative. My journey had its ups and downs.

For almost 4 weeks prior to testing I had been focusing on building a strong immune system and strengthened it even further after receiving my results. I began running daily, very early in the morning before people were on the road. I felt that I needed to do something to build my physical and mental strength as well as my immune system.

I ran 10km to 15km daily and lost 10kg. I felt much stronger physically and mentally, and my general wellness improved drastically.

It was frustrating sitting at home for the whole 2 weeks so to combat this, I interacted electronically a lot with my colleagues at work on work-related matters, and I was receiving and responding to all correspondence on my emails. That kept my mind alive and busy!

Support systems made all the difference to me, and I am so thankful for that. I received a lot of support from my family members via phone-calls, assistance with groceries, and medication.

At work, my progress was checked on by my colleagues and supervisors, making me feel like an important member of the hospital and that my health mattered them.

I made an appointment with my GP for referral to a private laboratory for another COVID-19 Test on Friday the 22nd May 2020. I was very nervous and emotional on this day and emotional as I worried about the test results.

I received my results on Sunday 24th May 2020. I tested negative! It was one of the most exciting moments of my life, I was grateful to God Almighty for another chance at life.

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# DO YOUR MANDELA DAY 67 MINUTES

## Roll up your sleeves, All hands on Deck, Uplift your Communities

Saturday 18th of July 2020 is the Birthday of former President Nelson Mandela. The worldwide commemoration of this day is always marked by a string of goodwill activities which are aimed at advancing our communities as a symbol of honouring President Mandela.

This weekend (Saturday in particular) is expected to be abuzz with activities as people will be making their 67 minutes by embarking in all sorts of action to uplift their communities.

The government of KwaZulu Natal will deploy all its MEC Champions to lead activities in their relevant Districts and encourage locals to participate in honouring Madiba.

2020



# #MANDELA DAY

## TAKE ACTION INSPIRE CHANGE

## MAKE EVERY DAY A MANDELA DAY

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# FIGHTING BOREDOM AT HOME

Being at home can set in a feeling of boredom and frustration. Even stress can develop during this period due to a drop in meaningful activities, sensory stimuli and social engagement; financial strain from being unable to work; and a lack of access to typical coping strategies such as going to the gym or attending religious services. Miss Pinky Madlala a Psychologist at Northdale Hospital has some tips for you.

## TRY THESE 6 TIPS TO FIGHT BOREDOM:

### 1. Remind yourself why you're doing this

As staying home is the most effective way to prevent the further transmission of the coronavirus, it is meaningful to socially isolate. Staying home is a sacrifice we're actively making for the good of others and ourselves.

### 2. Find a rhythm

Routines structure our days, and provide a sense of coherence that reinforces our meaning in life. People's lives feel more meaningful in moments when they're engaged in daily routines.

### 3. Use psychological strategies to manage stress and stay positive

Examine your worries and aim to be realistic in your assessment of the actual concern as well as your ability to cope. Try not to catastrophize; instead focus on what you can do, and accept the things you can't change. One way to do this is to keep a daily gratitude journal.

### 4. Maintain a healthy lifestyle

Get enough sleep, eat well and exercise in your home when you are physically capable of doing so.

### 5. Stay virtually connected with others

Your face-to-face interactions may be limited, but psychologists suggest using phone calls, text messages, video chat and social media to access social support networks. If you're feeling sad or anxious, use these conversations as an opportunity to discuss your experience and associated emotions. Reach out to those you know who are in a similar situation. Facebook groups have already formed to facilitate communication and support among individuals asked to quarantine.

### 6. Try something new

Boredom pushes many of us towards the novel. Embrace that urge, carefully. If you have the energy, try a new recipe, experiment with home repairs, or learn a new dance.



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