



## KZN HEALTH MEC PLEASED WITH BRAND NEW NEONATAL WARD AT GEN. GIZENGA JUSTICE MPANZA HOSPITAL



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# KZN HEALTH MEC PLEASSED WITH BRAND NEW NEONATAL WARD AT GEN. GIZENGA JUSTICE MPANZA HOSPITAL

**KWAZULU-Natal Health MEC Ms Nomagugu Simelane-Zulu has urged expectant mothers to help the province fully eradicate the transmission of HIV/AIDS to children during birth by presenting themselves early to Primary Health Care clinics.**

The MEC also says early visits by pregnant women to clinics and hospitals can reduce the rate of maternal and child mortality in the province.

Speaking during an #OperationSiyahlola ('We are inspecting') visit at the General Justice Gizenga Mpanza Memorial Hospital (formerly Stanger Hospital) this week, MEC Simelane-Zulu urged pregnant women not to shy away from healthcare facilities, but to come forward.

"This ensures that we are able to treat them properly, and if there are any complications, we are able to pick them up early and deal with them at that particular level.

"We have seen in other instances, mothers having to die unnecessarily, purely because of late presentation. But we've also seen in a few areas – and there really are not many of those – babies that are still being born with HIV and AIDS, which is something that should not be happening in this day and age because we now have proper treatment that prevents mother-to-child transmission."

KwaZulu-Natal has managed to reduce the rate of Mother-to-Child transmission of HIV/AIDS from 20% in 2008, to 0.6% in 2021. During the second quarter of the 2020/21 financial year, the province had a maternal mortality rate of 112.9 per 100 000, with an actual 65 fatalities; whereas in the third quarter, this moved to 113 per 100 000, with 59 actual deaths.

"So, we are calling on women to take these matters seriously... and come to our facilities early, so that they get the treatment that they need to prevent such occurrences," says the MEC.



She was nevertheless extremely pleased with the progress that has been made at the GJGM Hospital's new maternity and neonatal complex, with features and services that are of a standard that is comparable to those found in the private sector.

The new complex was completed in 2019 and handed over for use in 2020. It has brought previously spatially fragmented maternal and child health services under one roof.

#### Among its key components are:

- Nine stand-alone labour wards (one mother and her baby in each ward, as is the case in private hospitals);
- A mothers' lodge with 15 beds;
- An antenatal ward with 43 beds;
- A post-natal ward with 63 beds; and
- A total of 33 beds in its gynaecology ward.

It also has a brand-new helipad, a human milk bank; as well as a dedicated room for staff who need to express milk for breast-feeding.

MEC Simelane-Zulu also expressed gratitude to her counterpart, Public Works MEC Ms Peggy Nkonyeni, for intervening when completion of this complex was beset by delays.

"They started building this complex in 2013, but it has continuously had challenges... resulting in a stop and go kind of

arrangement.

We were able to speak to MEC Nkonyeni last year, and requested her assistance to ensure this facility gets completed.

"We are thankful for her intervention, and are pleased with the progress that has been made. We now have about 177 beds, which has assisted us to open up space elsewhere, so that those wards that are in the main hospital are utilised for other things. Thanks to its completion, maternal and neonatal services are now being provided from within one complex.

"But it's not just about the issue of beds... Actually, when you talk about this facility, it's also about the level of skilled professionals that are now there. The doctors who are able to assist our patients.

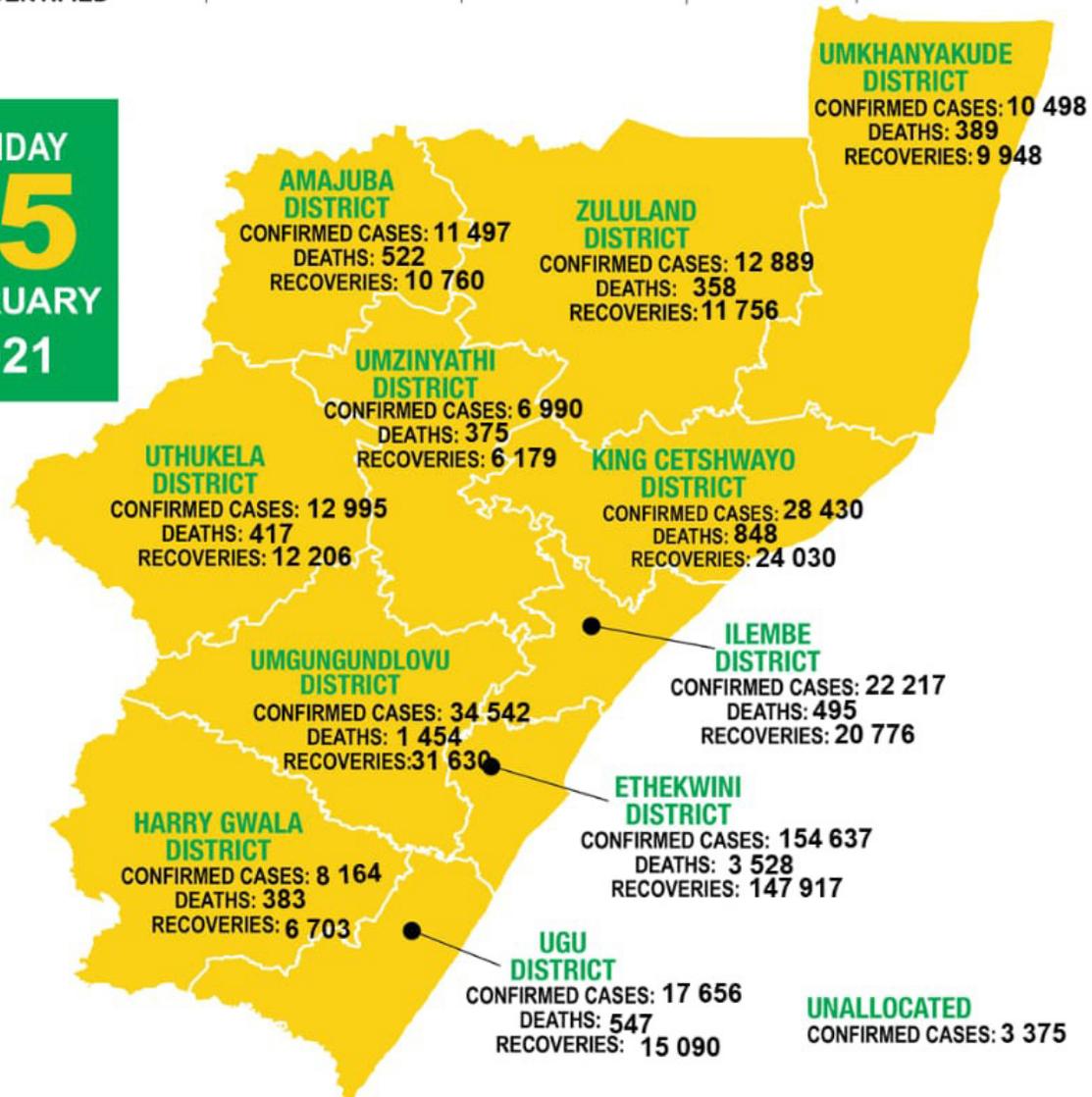
"There is a lot of innovation that has been done here. One thing that got me excited is the fact that they have a milk bank, which is not just for patients, but also for staff who are expressing. That just indicates the caring Government that we are. When you look at the mothers' lodges... They're different from any other that we've had in the past. Now, this is clearly an indication that the KZN Department of Health... where we start building... we are investing in proper infrastructure, so that the dignity of our people is maintained at all times."

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# COVID-19 STATISTICS IN KZN

				
<b>324 754</b>	<b>17 579</b>	<b>296 995</b>	<b>9 316</b>	<b>374</b>
POSITIVE CASES IDENTIFIED	ACTIVE CASES	RECOVERIES	DEATHS	NEW CASES

MONDAY  
**15**  
FEBRUARY  
2021



Learn more to Be READY for #COVID19:  
[www.sacoronavirus.co.za](http://www.sacoronavirus.co.za)

NICD Hotline: 0800 029 999  
WhatsApp 'Hi' to 0600 123 456



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# VACCINATION ROLL OUT PLAN: PERSPECTIVE FROM A UKZN SCIENTIST PROFESSOR MOSA MOSHABELA

South Africa was on track to launch the rollout of vaccines for Covid-19 in the second week of February 2021, after receiving the first batch of the Astra-Zeneca vaccines on the first of February 2021 from the Serum Institute of India. These vaccines were going to be distributed among frontline health workers as part of the Phase 1 of the national vaccine rollout. Whilst this first batch of vaccines was undergoing the quality check protocol at the national control laboratory in Bloemfontein, the preliminary results of the Astra-Zeneca clinical trial study in South Africa were released.

The results of the study indicated that the efficacy of the vaccine, under controlled clinical testing circumstances, was reduced from 75% to 22% for mild and moderate disease among 'healthier' adults without risk factors for Covid-19. The study suggested that instead of protecting three in four people from mild to moderate Covid-19, the Astra-Zeneca vaccine could perhaps only protect one in four or five people with mild to moderate Covid-19. The cause of this reduced success of the vaccine was indicated as the effects of the new variant discovered in South Africa, referred to as 501Y.V2, which is considered to be slippery than other forms of the Covid-19 virus.

When the news broke earlier in the month of February 2021, we were all disappointed and the Minister immediately put the rollout of the vaccine on hold. Immediately people started peddling incorrect information, either due to misunderstanding or misinformation. Nevertheless, it's worth clarifying a few things about the results of this study, and the impact they have had so far on the much-anticipated vaccine rollout plan.



PROFESSOR MOSA MOSHABELA

- Firstly, the vaccine rollout has been put on hold, not abandoned. The Minister sought to consult with scientists to help guide him on how to handle the situation in a way that is best informed by all we know about the science to date, and this was a very good strategic decision.
- Secondly, the hold on the process was not because of an expiry date at the end of April. The vaccine's shelf life of about six months is expected, and a vaccine registered in December can be expected to expire at the end of April. Also, if the results of the Astra-Zeneca vaccine clinical trial in South Africa were more promising, the matter of the expiry date would not have been an issue at all, and the vaccine would have been rolled out in time for completion of vaccination at the end of March 2021. In fact, the whole matter of the expiry date was a distraction from the real matter, and that is the efficacy of the vaccine.
- Thirdly, the results of the study created a bit of confusion, largely because they were not providing us with clear-cut evidence. The study, by clinical trial standards, was based on a small sample size of about 2000 participants, and did not address the

question of whether the vaccine protects against serious disease and death from Covid-19. This is important because any good vaccine should protect from severe disease and death at the most minimum, and results that do not speak to this question creates a lot of confusion. Just to clarify, the results do not confirm that the vaccine does not protect against serious disease, but it did not address this question at all, and therefore the question still remains. It was also a good thing that this study was done in South Africa with our local variant.

- Lastly, the hold was helpful in considering other options, such as Johnson and Johnson vaccine, which was also tested in South Africa. This vaccine offers more conclusive results, in that it protects nearly six in ten people from mild and moderate disease, and nine in ten people against serious disease and death. This vaccine uses only one dose, as opposed to the two doses from the Astra-Zeneca vaccine. It makes sense therefore to rollout this vaccine as soon as it's registered in South Africa. Also, it's important that the Astra-Zeneca vaccine does not get abolished, but get tested against its ability to protect people in South Africa from serious disease and death.

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# HOD DR SANDILE TSHABALALA SPEAKS ON VACCINE ROLL OUT



**Also aired on East Coast Radio on 09 February 2021**

***There's a lot of confusion around the vaccine right now.***

***Can you clarify what's happening?***

In short, the Astrazeneca vaccine was tested when we had the first wave. During that time we had strains that were very responsive to this vaccine.

In the second wave, we developed a second strain. When we received the vaccine, its effectiveness was tested with the strains existing in the country and it was found to be effective against all others except the B.1.351 strain.

Other vaccines, such as the Johnson & Johnson version, have been found to be more effective than Astrazeneca so our plans are going to continue but we may find ourselves using the Johnson & Johnson one.

***How has the roll-out plan been affected?***

The time in which we start the roll out may be effected, depending on when we receive the new vaccine.

We have, however, been promised that the Johnson & Johnson one will arrive in February. Our 91 sites are ready but the start date is what might change.



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# PUBLIC VIEWS ON COVID-19 VACCINATION?



Although President Cyril Ramaphosa has made it clear that the COVID-19 will not be compulsory for citizens, the KZN Department of Health urges individuals to choose to vaccinate in order to protect themselves and their loved ones against the virus.

Health Chat took to the streets of Pietermaritzburg to find out whether or not people would be receiving the COVID-19 vaccine.

## Oondi (45)

**Q:** Do you know about the COVID-19 vaccine that will be made available to South Africans?

**A:** I've heard of it

**Q:** Will you be taking it?

**A:** Yes, because it will protect us.



## Sithabile (35)

**Q:** Do you know about the COVID-19 vaccine that will be made available to South Africans?

**A:** Yes

**Q:** Will you be taking it?

**A:** I doubt I'll take it because I've heard so many negative things about it. I heard that in March it will have expired. On social media they're saying it will have side effects that they don't know.



## Sbonelo (25)

**Q:** Do you know about the COVID-19 vaccine that will be made available to South Africans?

**A:** Yes

**Q:** Will you be taking it?

Yes, if it helps. My belief though is that the vaccine should have been issued before it spread in the country. Now we need a cure more than a vaccine.

## Sfundo (28)

**Q:** Do you know about the COVID-19 vaccine that will be made available to South Africans?

**A:** Yes I've heard of it but I've never seen it before.

**Q:** Will you be taking it?

**A:** Yes, but only if senior politicians take it first. Only when we see those in parliament take it, will we take it. However, I don't want the 22% effective one though, only the Johnson & Johnson one.

## Amanda (24)

**Q:** Do you know about the COVID-19 vaccine that will be made available to South Africans?

**A:** Yes I've heard of it

**Q:** Will you be taking it?

**A:** No, because it has not been tested well. People have a lot of diseases so until the vaccine can accommodate everyone, I won't.

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# KZN HEALTH MEC REACTS TO PUBLIC PROTECTOR'S FINDINGS



**WE WISH to take this opportunity to welcome a recently-released closing report from the Public Protector, Adv Busisiwe Mkhwebane, on an investigation by her office, which has absolved us of any wrong-doing regarding the release of COVID - 19 statistics.**

The investigation centred on a complaint by the DA that I, as MEC for Health in KZN, “had violated the Executive Ethics Code by not releasing daily Covid-19 localised confirmed data at provincial, district and local municipal levels for the Province, despite reportedly having been requested to do so.”

The complaint was lodged with the Public Protector by DA MPL Dr Rishigen Viranna (Complainant), on 19 June 2020.

The Public Protector’s report once again exposes the DA as a shallow, and self-serving party that is pre-occupied with attracting attention to itself at all costs – even in the midst of a deadly global pandemic such as COVID - 19.

It is most unfortunate that the party remains bent on sowing political division, public alarm and panic, at a time when the country needs to be united and positive more than ever before.

Dr Viranna lodged the complaint in spite of us communicating this information openly, transparently, and regularly.

He alleged, among others, that this so-called “refusal” amounted to an abuse of power and constituted a breach of the provisions of paragraphs 2.1(c) and 2.1(d) of the Executive Ethics Code.

In our response to the complaint, dated 3 September 2020, we referred to the provisions of the Disaster Management Act and related Regulations, and indicated that after the declaration of the State of National Disaster, all information and data regarding the COVID-19 pandemic was released and communicated by the national Minister of Health.

We emphasised that the communication of Covid-19 information by the Minister of Health is at all times transparent and was - and continues to be - shared with the national and provincial governments.

This is done in order to facilitate the implementation of necessary and adequate measures in dealing with the pandemic.

We correctly stated that, as from 19 April 2020, the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Command Council had started confirming the COVID-19 data that was released by the Minister of Health for KZN; and that as from 24 June 2020, the Provincial Command Council had started doing so on a daily basis, breaking this information down into district and municipal levels.

We furthermore also made the point that the allegations made against us did not refer to any provision of any law, legal obligation, or resolution of the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Executive Council that we might have violated or transgressed, and we added that “there is no regulation nor law that instructs me to issue the cases at district or local municipal level.”

We remain steadfast in our belief that we have always acted in good faith and in the best interests of good governance when dealing with the COVID - 19 information.

We are therefore pleased, and feel vindicated by the statements made in Adv Mkhwebane’s closing report, which partly reads, and I quote:

“It is not disputed that the Minister of Health releases daily confirmed data on, inter alia the number of people infected, number of deaths and the recovery rate for the entire country.

“There is no provision in the Disaster Management Act or the Regulations that places any obligation on the MEC to daily release confirmed Covid-19 case data at provincial, district and municipal levels.

“The complainant further did not dispute that the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Government confirms the data released by the Minister of Health, on a regular basis.

“Neither the provisions of the Disaster Management Act, nor the Regulations impact on the constitutional imperative of access to information held by the state, as contemplated by section 32(1) of the Constitution, relating to the spread and impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, as it provides specifically for the dissemination of information to the public, at the level of the national executive.

“The allegation that the MEC has a legal obligation to daily release confirmed Covid-19 case data at provincial, district and municipal levels in the KwaZulu- Natal Province is not supported by the information and evidence obtained from the investigation, and the application of the relevant laws and prescripts.

“The MEC therefore did not fail to release daily confirmed Covid-19 data, as she was under no obligation to do so.

“There was accordingly no conduct on her part that constitutes a breach of paragraphs 2.1 and 2.3 of the Executive Ethics Code as alleged by the Complainant.”

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# VALENTINE'S DAY IN A PANDEMIC

February is known as the sexual reproductive month and otherwise dubbed as the 'month of love' because of Valentine's Day on the 14th of February 2021. As we get soaked up in the mood for romantic celebrations, we also need to be mindful that COVID-19 is still lurking and ready to pounce on anyone who exposes himself/herself to risk. Unfortunately, the virus does not celebrate Valentine's Day or any other special occasions we have. That is why we need to be careful about our actions on Valentine's Day and during this entire month to ensure that we don't come out on the other side with unplanned pregnancies, Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI), HIV/AIDS or COVID-19. Let us not be tempted to do things that have negative long term effects

The pandemic does not mean we have to pull the plug from all our festivities but find safer ways of celebrating. Here are some tips on how to celebrate Valentine's Day this year in a safe manner, whether it is with a significant other, friend or family member:

 Using protection – 12-16 February 2021 is reserved as STI/Condom week. It aims to educate and inform people about the importance of condom use, to not only reduce the spread of STI's but to also curb the spread of HIV/AIDS and/or unplanned pregnancy. By using protection you are not only taking necessary steps to keep yourself safe but those of your sexual partner as well.

 Exercising – when you take part in physical activity, your body releases endorphins, also known as 'the happy

hormones' and it is known to trigger positive feelings, reduce stress, boost self-esteem and improve sleep. You could go on a hike, a bike ride or jog around your neighbourhood.

 Staying in – staying at home is one of the ways that you can protect yourself from contracting COVID-19, and it does not have to be boring. There are plenty of things that you can do, such as catching up on your favourite series, reading a book or playing board games with your significant other or family members.

 Pampering yourself – having a spa day at home is a cheap effective way to celebrate Valentine's Day. You could opt for massages with stress-relieving oils such as lavender oil or lemongrass oil or spoil yourself with face masks, bubble baths and manicures and pedicures for a full spa day feel.



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# CONSEQUENCES OF UNTREATED CANCER CAN BE DIRE

**KwaZulu-Natal specialised cancer treatment hospitals are doing their utmost to minimise the risk of COVID-19 to patients and visitors to their facilities during this pandemic.**

The Department of Health in KZN has looked into how treatment of cancer patients has been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic as the world commemorated World Cancer Day on the 4th of February 2021.

While we acknowledge people's fear of a potential COVID-19 infection, patients with a known cancer diagnosis are encouraged to attend their appointments as the consequences of untreated cancer can be dire.

The oncology department at both Addington Hospital and Inkosi Albert Luthuli Central Hospital have remained functional during the COVID-19 pandemic, including the peaks of the pandemic.

"Despite this, the commitment and perseverance of all the staff in the radiation and medical oncology teams has been amazing. We are very grateful to have been able to continue services during this time for the sake of our patients," said Dr Bhadree of Inkosi Albert Luthuli Central Hospital.



**MR KANDASAMY MARRY**

"There has been an increase in the number of patients defaulting their appointment dates during this time for several reasons: patients fear contracting infection at the hospitals, transport challenges, especially during the level 5 lockdown, patients in remission opting to defer their appointments to later dates, patients suffering from the economic effects of the pandemic, making even a hospital visit too costly for them," said Dr Bhadree.

"Although we have postponed the majority of non-urgent operations for up to 3 months after counseling all affected patients, theatre slates and outpatient clinics are reserved for cancer patients and other patients with life threatening conditions.

So cancer patients have been prioritized and have generally not been adversely affected," said Dr David Batuule of St Aiden's Hospital in Durban.

Mr Kandasamy Marry, 66 years-old from Chatsworth in Durban is currently undergoing treatment for prostate cancer at St Aiden's Hospital and at the Inkosi Albert Luthuli Central Hospital.

He was diagnosed with cancer this year in January at St Aiden's Hospital.

"I just came out of the theatre on 3 February, 2021 for prostate. And then I am booked for 22nd of February (2021) at Albert Luthuli to take over the cancer treatment," said Mr Kandasamy.

He said his condition has received immediate attention despite the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic.

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# BE WARY OF

## FAKE JOB ADVERTS AND FRAUDULENT LETTERS OF APPOINTMENT

The KZN Department of Health wishes to advise people seeking employment to be wary of fake department vacancy adverts. The Department has again become the target of job scammers, claiming that the Department is recruiting. The adverts are scattered on various social media platforms and placed on popular websites such as Gumtree and Indeed. The public are warned not to fall for scams and rather familiarize themselves with the recruitment processes of the Department.

The Department publicizes its vacancies on reputable newspapers, the Department of Public Service and Administration's site ([dpsa.gov.za](http://dpsa.gov.za)), and its own official website ([kznhealth.gov.za](http://kznhealth.gov.za)), as well as occasionally on its official Facebook page.

Furthermore, service providers are urged to be wary of fraudulent letters of appointment bearing the Department logo. In some instances, the letters are received when the service provider did not tender a bid. In the letter, awardees are asked to pay a down payment. The Department calls on service providers to ensure that surety bonds are paid into the relevant Department account.

The Department follows a strict Supply chain management process in accordance with the government financial Act when procuring goods and services. Anyone receiving a letter of award must look out for:

- poor grammar
- suspicious contact numbers and
- incorrect letterheads

The KZN Department of Health reiterates its commitment towards combatting fraud and corruption.

Should anyone encounter illegal activity such as fraud, bribery, maladministration, human rights violations, discrimination, please report to our official social media pages, senior health officials in facilities and the

**Special Investigation Unit (SIU) on (031) 761 6600.**

All reports are treated with confidentiality.



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