



health

Department:
Health
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



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INTERNAL MEMO

Date:	11 November 2020		
To:	Minister ZL Mkhize, Honorable Minister of Health	From:	Ministerial Advisory Committee (MAC) on Covid-19

NATIONAL STATE OF DISASTER EXTENSION

Problem Statement

The National State of Disaster declared in terms of the Disaster Management Act (Act 57 of 2002) in response to the Covid-19 pandemic requires extension on a monthly basis, after the initial 3-month declaration has expired. The next extension of the National State of Disaster must be gazetted before 15 November 2020, if considered necessary.

The MAC on Covid-19 was requested to provide advice on the list of minimum core prevention and control measures that need to be instituted through regulations required under the National Health Act (Act 61 of 2003) for the management of the Covid-19 pandemic as part of the exit strategy from the National State of Disaster.

MAC on Covid-19 Considerations/ Evidence Review

- Based on international experience of 2nd waves, South Africa has to plan on the basis that a 2nd wave (or 2nd surge) is likely. Hence, certain elements of the current Covid-19 restrictions that reduce the risk of a 2nd surge will still be needed once the National State of Disaster is lifted.
- Many countries are experiencing resurgence of the virus while within South Africa, there are outbreaks occurring regularly, the most recent being in the Eastern Cape.
- The updates required for the various pieces of legislation, including the National Health Act's Notifiable Medical Condition regulations will require time to ensure that they are sufficiently clearly articulated to achieve their stated goals.
- The migration of regulations will take detailed planning. Hence, there is a necessity to further extend the National State of Disaster to ensure vital prevention measures in the current regulations are maintained.

Recommendations

1. The National State of Disaster be extended for another month to provide the time needed to plan that transition of implementing prevention measures that are under the national state of disaster to various other legislation, especially the national Health Act.
2. Following this extension, it is recommended that consideration be given to an additional 1 month extension of the National State of Disaster in December 2020, to have the measures in force over the festive period.
3. Efforts to improve and support continued implementation of Alert Level 1 regulations during this time is needed to ensure important prevention measures are adhered to.

Rationale for recommendations

As we approach the holiday and festive season where there will be anticipated movement around the country, as well as, family and spiritual gatherings. The extension of the National State of Disaster will allow for the directives and regulations to be in place while consideration is given to the movement of key regulations to the appropriate pieces of legislation.

The MAC on Covid-19 is continuing to review the evidence and the balancing the need for compulsory and voluntary measures to reduce SARS-CoV-2 risk. The restrictions that have been imposed to limit the spread of SARS-CoV-2, reduce the impact on the economy, and in enable the health system to cope. The extent to which elements of the current restrictions can be accommodated in regulations issued in terms of the National Health Act is still under discussion. A further advisory will be produced following deliberations.

Thank you for consideration of this request.

Kind regards,



PROFESSOR SALIM S. ABDOOL KARIM



PROF MARIAN JACOBS

CO-CHAIRPERSONS: MINISTERIAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON COVID-19

DATE: 11 November 2020

CC:

- » **Dr S Buthelezi (Director-General)**
- » **Dr T Pillay (Deputy Director-General)**
- » **Incident Management Team**