

Opening Remarks: Minister Zwelini Mkhize:

Launch of EVDS Registration for COVID-19 Vaccination: Citizens Aged 60 and Above

Today it is our great pleasure to launch the Official South African COVID 19 Vaccination Programme Registration Portal. The Electronic Vaccination Data System is now available to the general public and invites all citizens aged 60 years and above to register for vaccination.

This launch marks a significant milestone not only for our vaccination campaign but for South Africa's advancement towards Universal Health Coverage: This is the first time in our democratic history that a major public health campaign will be supported by one digital system for all South Africans. This is in line with the 9th pillar of the Presidential Health Compact, which commits to strengthening the health system by developing an information system that will guide health policies, strategies and investments. Some of the key activities proposed in the presidential health compact have found expression in the development and establishment of the EVDS system for the general population. These include, by example:

- Developing a system that complies with the Interoperability Standards for Digital health
- Capitalizing the functionality of the of a South African Health Information Exchange Service to allow the secure sharing of data between the different systems that make up the Electronic Vaccination data System

- The development and implementation of procedures and systems for identity verification of users of the health system (both those in public and in private), expanding the capabilities of the Health Patient Registration System platform
- Utilizing the Business Intelligence Platform and Data lake functionality to standardised health outcomes reporting for both public and private sectors.

I am highlighting this because it is important to demonstrate the critical foundation that was laid by the leadership of our President and, subsequently, the commitment of the department to follow through on these determinations and manifest advancements towards the implementation of the National Health Insurance. I must congratulate the development team, ably led by Ms Milani Wolmarans, for their stamina and sheer determination to ensure that this system is implemented on time and is user friendly for our citizens.

The President, myself as the Minister of Health, hundreds of thousands of Health Care Workers and now you, the citizens of South Africa, have or will all access the vaccines through the same process, by enlisting using this system - there will be no distinction between private and state health care users, with the exception that private health care users will input their medical aid details. The quality of services will be the same for all of us and the system will assign a vaccination site closest to our homes or where we work- not based on whether a particular site is a public or private facility.

This system is therefore a proud representation of the future of health care in this country, under the NHI, which is typified by multi-sectoral collaboration and social solidarity. In this regard we are joined by representatives from **Business for South Africa**, because the realization of this system would not have been possible without the collaboration of the private sector and business at large. This outcome shows that indeed our society is maturing in the right direction- a direction towards health systems strengthening as a unified force.

In a short while, the team will do a demonstration to show us all how easy it is to register on the EVDS system. If you are 60 years or older, you may now register for vaccination. You must have your ID and medical aid card (if you have one) ready before you register. When you register, it is very important that you put in the correct cell phone number, the address where you live, and the correct medical aid number (if you have one). Remember that registration does not guarantee that you will be vaccinated immediately We will use the Information you provide when you register to communicate with you about the vaccination program when necessary.

The data from the system assists us to allocate the vaccines to the vaccine service points, ensuring that enough vaccines are available on a particular vaccination day.

The details of the vaccinations will be captured digitally creating an electronic health record. In cases where we have your mobile number you

will receive an SMS confirming that you have been vaccinated and you will also be provided with a Vaccination card

To register on the website:

1. First make sure you have internet access.
2. You will need a smartphone, a tablet or a computer.
3. Connect to the internet and go to vaccine.enroll.health.gov.za. The welcome screen will guide you through the steps and this is what the demonstration team will show us shortly.
4. It is important to follow the instructions and put in all the details the system asks for.
5. When you are finished, the system will send an SMS to the phone number you provided. This SMS will confirm that you are registered. This means that the system now has your details in a queue to be scheduled for your vaccine.
6. When it is your turn to be vaccinated, the system will send you another SMS with a date and the place where you will be vaccinated. If you put in the correct address, you will be sent to the vaccination centre that is closest to your home. Some of you may be directed to your place of work.
7. If you have problems you may contact the COVID-19 Hotline at 0800 029 999. A dedicated call centre for the EVDS is being finalized and that number will be announced and displayed on the EVDS portal when you register.

The details you provide us with will also be used to communicate essential information on the vaccination program, when necessary, through this application.

At the vaccination service point, the vaccination details of individuals will be recorded digitally, and individuals will be provided with a proof of vaccination card and will receive a confirmation sms on their phone

I want to reassure South Africans that we do have a plan to ensure that everyone is registered and we want as many people as possible to be registered before going to be vaccinated: this will save a lot of time and will also help us to allocate vaccinations to respective areas appropriately.

We do understand that not everyone in this country has a smart phone or has access to the internet. For this reason, we will be using the smartphones and petrol that has been donated to us by various companies and philanthropic organizations to send out teams to help our vulnerable citizens who do not have access to digital technology: this includes the elderly, the homeless and those who live in deep rural areas that are difficult to reach. We will ensure that these team members are easy to identify and that you can verify that they are indeed accredited outreach team members. You will all recall that we had a successful community screening and testing campaign at the beginning of the pandemic and we have indeed used the lessons learnt from that initiative to devise this outreach programme. Our team members will also be trained

to be able to educate and raise awareness on vaccination in the community.

We are also proud that there will be Whatsapp service added shortly that will allow people to register on Whatsapp. We will announce when this service is ready.

If you are unable to register by these methods, you may simply go to the nearest vaccination centre and we will register you on the spot. If you are 60 years or above we will also vaccinate you at the same time. If you are not, we will register you but we may ask you to return for your vaccination- this is only because we really want to prioritise those who are most at risk of getting sick or dying of COVID-19. Please bring your ID and your medical aid card, if you have one, to speed up the process.

Finally, we urge all those who are technological savvy to assist our senior citizens to register. Please help your mother, your father, your grandmother, your grandfather or your friend who is 60 years or older to register so they can get vaccinated. We can all guide each other and look after each other to get through this unprecedented crisis.

For now, let us allow our senior citizens to register on the EVDS system. When we are ready to register citizens in other age groups, we will make an announcement

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