
**TO: DDG: CHIEF OF OPERATIONS
CHIEF DIRECTORS
DIRECTORS
HEADS OF INSTITUTIONS
HEAD OF HEALTH: CITY OF CAPE TOWN**

Circular H .15.../2022

**COVID-19 VACCINE PROJECT OFFICE: Strategic Focus Update:
Integrating Covid-19 vaccination as part of routine care on the health service platform (in-facility and community-based platform)**

1. Introduction

The Western Cape commenced implementation of the Covid-19 Vaccination Programme (post Sisonke 1) in May 2021. Notwithstanding the significant impact that Covid-19 has had on the health system and the delivery of health services to date, we have now reached a stage where the Covid-19 vaccination programme must also be integrated into routine health services and be provided along with other appropriate health interventions for different target groups.

2. Current Status at Covid-19 Vaccination Sites

Since implementation commenced, Covid-19 vaccination has largely been made available through the following implementation models:

- i) As a stand-alone service offered at **fixed sites** specifically set up for this purpose. Fixed sites are either based at existing health facilities or established in community settings.
- ii) Covid-19 Vaccination offered via **outreach teams** that establish pop-up sites in community settings.
- iii) **Mobile vaccination units** that can move from one location to another in community settings to offer Covid-19 vaccination to hard-to-reach populations.

As of mid-February 2022, more than 2.7 million individuals have received a Covid-19 vaccination in the Western Cape. The opportunity presents whereby the vaccination of the more than 2 million unvaccinated individuals can be maximised by integrating Covid-19 Vaccination into routine

health services, both in health facilities and via outreach services. Integration of Covid-19 vaccination must be geared towards achieving the targets across the different age bands and geographic areas.

3. Providing an integrated package of health services inclusive of Covid-19 Vaccination

3.1 Integration of Covid-19 Vaccination at Health Facilities

3.1.1 Primary Health Care Facilities

A total of 179 public sector primary healthcare facilities in the Western Cape are registered on the Master Facility List to provide Covid-19 vaccinations. These facilities are currently or have previously provided on-site Covid-19 vaccination. Districts and Sub-structures must identify which of these facilities will be prioritised for the integration of Covid-19 vaccination into routine care and plan towards offering vaccination at **all** primary health care facilities, since clients accessing the service are regarded a captive audience. Each facility will then determine, based on available infrastructure and resources, whether Covid-19 vaccination will be offered at a dedicated service point or be made available at a number of service points.

All clients presenting at Primary Healthcare Facilities, should be managed as follows:

- i. Client's vaccination status to be assessed
- ii. Client to be offered Covid-19 vaccination
- iii. If client accepts, the vaccination to be duly provided and recorded on EVDS
- iv. All high-risk patients (clients currently receiving chronic medication, antenatal clients, etc.) to be identified and vaccination status assessed. All high-risk, unvaccinated clients to be offered vaccination.

Cold chain, IT equipment, software, a stable network connection, alternative electricity supply and trained staff should be in place to offer vaccinations. Facility should assess capacity needs and do the necessary planning to accommodate COVID-19 vaccinations.

Decentralised ordering of Covid-19 vaccine stock at PHC Level should be considered and according to the current and planned practices, this should be possible with effect 1 April 2022.

3.1.2 Hospitals and Long-stay Care Facilities

All clients presenting at Emergency Centres, Antenatal Clinics, Out-Patient Departments, and In-Patient services at hospitals should be managed as follows:

- i. Facility to be registered on Master Facility List (if not yet registered and intends to provide on-site vaccination)
- ii. Vaccination status of all patients to be assessed

- iii. Vaccination offered (if on-site vaccination is available) OR referral to closest vaccination site OR partner with PHC facility to provide an outreach vaccination service to the hospital at regular intervals
- iv. All vaccines administered to be captured on EVDS

An **administrator and vaccinator pair** could be the **roaming team** for each hospital to cover in- and out-patients departments. In very small district hospitals, a collaborative effort in the form of an **outreach from the local PHC team** can be considered.

Cold chain, IT equipment, software, a stable network connection, alternative electricity supply and trained staff should be in place to offer vaccinations. Facility should assess capacity needs and do the necessary planning to accommodate COVID-19 vaccinations.

Decentralised ordering of Covid-19 vaccine stock at institution level should be considered and according to the current and planned practices, this should be possible with effect 1 April 2022.

3.1.3 Primary Health Facilities not currently offering Immunisation Services

Primary healthcare facilities not currently offering Covid-19 vaccination services should:

- i. Assess the cold chain and determine cold chain requirements specific to the facility. Additional cold chain needs to be procured.
- ii. Assess staff capacity and training needs. Liaise with People Development Centre (PDC) to ensure that staff are appropriately trained.
- iii. Assess IT requirements and procure if necessary.
- iv. Assess the network stability and redundant connectivity options.
- v. Assess the alternative electricity supply options and the impact on the cold-chain.
- vi. Ensure registration of site onto MFL, if not yet registered.

3.2 Outreach Services

Vaccination data, by age band, should be interrogated in each COPC geographic area in order to determine the most feasible collaborative outreach efforts to find the unvaccinated individuals and encourage uptake.

Outreach vaccination services must be **aligned to the existing framework/model for Wellness Services as implemented by Metro Health Services and Rural Health Services** at community level and could include the following:

- a) Alternative distribution and collection of Chronic Medication
- b) Disease Prevention and Health Promotion activities across the life course (including easy access to barrier methods)

- c) Screening, monitoring and testing for chronic ailments (HIV, TB, Hypertension, Diabetes etc.)
- d) Appropriate linkage to care
- e) Defaulter tracing
- f) Limited clinical interventions (vaccination **(including Covid-19 Vaccination)**, family planning, etc.)

All clients presenting at Wellness Sites or outreach sites, should therefore be offered a comprehensive service that includes Covid-19 vaccination wherever possible, along with other relevant health services.

The provision of a more comprehensive package of services at Wellness Sites to include Covid-19 vaccination is in keeping with the Departmental vision of providing a holistic client-centred health service with an emphasis on the prevention and early management of conditions contributing most to the preventable burden of disease.

3.2.1 Congregate Settings

Congregate settings, e.g., Old Aged Homes, Frail Care Centres, Care Centres for Persons with Disabilities, etc., should be encouraged to ensure that measures are put in place that will enable the respective facilities to provide onsite vaccination to their clients by ensuring that:

- a) The facility is registered on MFL, if not yet registered,
- b) Relevant clinical/medical staff are trained to administer the Covid-19 vaccine,
- c) Relevant administrative staff are trained on EVDS,
- d) Necessary registrations for EVDS access are processed,
- e) Necessary agreements or Memoranda of Understanding are in place to ensure that the Department is able to provide the vaccines to the facility, where necessary.

3.2.2 School Health Programme

In February 2022, the Department of Basic Education released the Standard Operating Procedure for the containment and management of Covid-19 for schools and school communities (<https://www.education.gov.za/Portals/0/Documents/Recovery%20plan%20page/Links%20for%20schools/dbe-standard-operating-procedure-for-covid-19.pdf>).

This document stipulates the roles of schools during the vaccination of learners as follows:

- a) Mobilising educators and School Governing Bodies to provide information to learners and their parents/guardians regarding the benefits of vaccination.
- b) Notify parents and guardians when vaccinations are scheduled at school or in a temporary location near the school.

- c) Encourage learners to vaccinate and distribute education, information and communication (IEC) pamphlets and other material on the effectiveness of vaccines, linking learners to existing vaccination sites, in particular when the vaccination site is located near a school.
- d) **Vaccinations will be administered to some learners as part of the Integrated School Health Programme. Prior to vaccination of learners, the school must obtain consent from parents or guardians.** Vaccination of learners will be conducted by a range of service providers such as the Provincial Departments of Health, private sector providers or other clinical operators.
- e) The school should create an environment that encourages learners to vaccinate

Type text here

Please feel free to refer any areas that require clarity to Juanita.Arendse@westerncape.gov.za or Nicolette.Vanderwalt@westerncape.gov.za

JO ARENDSE

CHIEF DIRECTOR: EMERGENCY & CLINICAL SERVICES SUPPORT

DATE: