



TO: DDG: CHIEF OF OPERATIONS  
CD: METRO HEALTH SERVICES  
CD: RURAL HEALTH SERVICES  
CD: STRATEGY AND HEALTH SUPPORT  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: CITY HEALTH  
ALL DISTRICT DIRECTORS  
DIRECTOR: HIA

Circular .....39...../2024

## COVID-19 VACCINE UPDATE

*This circular replaces:*

*Circular H28/2024-Update on Covid-19 vaccination availability*

### BACKGROUND

National Department of Health has shared **Circular 1 OF 2024: NATIONAL VACCINATION PROGRAMME**. The circular informs the availability of Covid-19 vaccines, the management of expired vaccines, future procurement strategies and integration of Covid-19 vaccines into routine health services and the process for adverse events following an immunisation.

### Key highlights noted in the circular and provincial circular references:

1. Covid-19 vaccines procured through the National COVID-19 Vaccination Programme expired on 29 February 2024. Therefore, vaccination of adolescents and adults will not be available in either the public or private sector from 1 March 2024.
2. Vaccination of high-risk children should continue. These vaccinations **expire 30 June 2024**. Please refer to provincial Circular H82 of 2023-Vaccination of children 5- 11 years old at risk of severe Covid disease.
3. Expired Covid-19 vaccines must be discarded according to standard procedures.

4. Access to Covid-19 vaccines within the public sector will depend on guidance from the National Advisory Group on Immunisation (NAGI), the accessibility of appropriate registered Covid-19 vaccines in South Africa for procurement and the availability of funds.
5. Should Covid-19 vaccines become available for procurement in the public sector in the future, these vaccines will be procured and administered as part of routine adult vaccination services delivered through primary health care facilities.
6. There is also a possibility for the private sector to independently procure vaccines should they become available in future.
7. In accordance with Circular H33 of 2024, it is no longer necessary to report on the availability of **adult** Covid-19 vaccines on the **national** Stock Visibility System (SVS) and previous vaccine sites may be deactivated from the SVS.
8. From **30 April 2024, the Electronic Vaccine Data System (EVDS) will be decommissioned**, and access to the system will be closed except for those facilities approved to administer paediatric Covid-19 vaccines (until 30 June 2024). EVDS will be archived as per agreed standards.
9. **Following the decommissioning of EVDS, it will not be possible to access or download vaccination certificates.** Western Cape Department of Health and Wellness will send out communication to inform members of the public to download their vaccination certificate for safekeeping.
10. The management of adverse events following immunisation (AEFIs) remains active, with compensation processes in place for eligible cases through the No Fault Compensation Fund (NFCF). The legal requirement mandates that the claim process remains operational until every reported AEFI post-COVID-19 vaccination has been assessed and all claims resolved. This process is expected to last between 24 to 30 months.

Reporting, investigation, and causality assessment associated with COVID-19 vaccination is ongoing using the existing vaccine safety surveillance system within the Expanded Programme on Immunisation.

#### **Reporting and Investigation of AEFIs**

- The AEFI must be reported to the appropriate level (sub-district or district) within 24 hours of presentation to the health facility.
- AEFIs should be reported to the Provincial Communicable Disease Control-EPI office to:  
Tel: 021-815-8660/1/8740/8810 or 021-830-3727 or E-mail:  
[Charlene.Lawrence@westerncape.gov.za](mailto:Charlene.Lawrence@westerncape.gov.za); [Riana.Dippenaar@westerncape.gov.za](mailto:Riana.Dippenaar@westerncape.gov.za)  
[Farzanah.Frieslaar@westerncape.gov.za](mailto:Farzanah.Frieslaar@westerncape.gov.za), [Sonia.Botha@westerncape.gov.za](mailto:Sonia.Botha@westerncape.gov.za)
- An EPID number will be issued and a AEFI Case Reporting Form (CRF) form and/or Case Investigation Form (CIF) will need to be completed.

- The Case Reporting Form (CRF) is completed for all trigger events i.e., minor reactions, severe local reactions, and systemic reactions. In addition, the Case Investigation form (CIF) is completed for severe and serious reactions.
- **The following algorithms, case reporting and investigation specific to the Western Cape Department of Health and Wellness are attached for your convenience:**
  - **Updated Algorithm: Procedure for the reporting of AEFI for all vaccines, 01/02/2024** (related to Circular H72/2021)
  - **Case Reporting Form (CRF)** for Suspected Adverse Events Following Immunisation (AEFI) – All vaccines including COVID-19
  - **Case Investigation Form (CIF)** – AEFI and AESI – All vaccines including COVID-19
  - **Algorithm: Procedure for providing feedback on causality assessment, 01/02/2024** (related to Circular H56/2022)
  - **Circular H167/2022: Referral Pathway for serious and severe AEFI cases for clinical input for causality assessment.**
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For detailed information, please see the **National Vaccination Programme Circular 1 of 2024 attached.**

Any related queries can be directed to [Hilary.Goeiman@westerncape.gov.za](mailto:Hilary.Goeiman@westerncape.gov.za)

Yours sincerely



**Chief Director: Emergency and Clinical Services Support**

**Dr JO Arendse**

**Date:** 04 April 2024





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**TO:  
HEADS OF PROVINCIAL HEALTH DEPARTMENTS  
HEADS OF PHARMACEUTICAL SERVICES  
DISTRICT, HOSPITAL AND PHC MANAGERS  
COVID-19 VACCINE PROGRAMME MANAGERS  
COVID-19 VACCINATION SITE MANAGERS  
COVID-19 VACCINATORS**

**NATIONAL VACCINATION PROGRAMME CIRCULAR 1 OF 2024**

**INTEGRATION OF THE NATIONAL COVID-19 VACCINATION PROGRAMME INTO  
ROUTINE HEALTH SYSTEMS AND SERVICES**

1. COVID-19 vaccines procured through the National COVID-19 Vaccination programme expired on 29<sup>th</sup> February 2024. As a result, vaccination of adolescents and adults will not be available in either the public or the private sector from 1<sup>st</sup> March 2024.
2. Vaccination of high-risk children should continue as outlined in National Vaccination Programme Circular 3 of 2023. The remaining doses of paediatric COVID vaccines will expire on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2024 provided that have been stored between -90°C and -60°C.
3. The paediatric COVID vaccines have a shelf life of up to 10 weeks when stored at 2 - 8°C, and there are no paediatric COVID vaccines in central storage.

**MANAGEMENT OF EXPIRED COVID-19 VACCINES**

4. All expired COVID-19 vaccines must now be discarded by each provider that holds the stock following standard procedures. Any questions regarding this process should be directed to pharmaceutical services at district or provincial level.

**FUTURE AVAILABILITY OF COVID-19 VACCINES**

5. Future procurement of COVID-19 vaccines will be based on established selection and procurement procedures.



6. Access to COVID-19 vaccines within the public sector will depend on guidance from the National Advisory Group on Immunisation (NAGI), the accessibility of appropriate registered COVID-19 vaccines in South Africa for procurement and the availability of funds.
7. The department has requested that SAHPRA remove the requirement that all COVID-19 vaccines should be procured through the National Vaccination Programme. This change will allow for the private sector to procure COVID-19 vaccines.

### **INTEGRATION OF VACCINATION INTO ROUTINE HEALTH SERVICES**

8. Should COVID-19 vaccines be made available for procurement in the public sector in the future, these vaccines will be procured and administered as part of routine adult vaccination services delivered through Primary Health Care facilities.
9. Provincial departments continue to be encouraged to establish Service Level Agreements with private providers to facilitate the delivery of childhood and adult immunisation services by these entities.

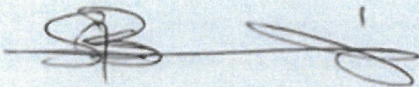
### **RECORDING AND REPORTING OF COVID VACCINES AND VACCINATION**

10. It will no longer be necessary to report availability of COVID-19 vaccines on the Stock Visibility System (SVS).
11. From 30<sup>th</sup> April 2024, the Electronic Vaccine Data System (EVDS) will be decommissioned as a system and access to the system will be closed except for those facilities which have been approved to administer paediatric COVID-19 vaccines (until 30th June 2024).
12. EVDS data will be archived as per the agreed standards for archiving such data. In the longer term, COVID-19 vaccination records will be incorporated into an individual's electronic medical record.
13. Members of the public should be informed that following decommissioning of the EVDS, it will no longer be possible to access or download their vaccination certificate. They should therefore be encouraged to download their vaccination certificate for safekeeping. The National Department of Health will make an announcement on this matter, but it is also important that health care workers and managers communicate this message as widely as possible.



## MANAGEMENT OF ADVERSE EVENTS FOLLOWING IMMUNISATION

14. Reporting, investigation and causality assessment of Adverse Events Following Immunisation (AEFIs) associated with COVID-19 vaccination is ongoing using the existing vaccine safety surveillance system within the Expanded Programme on Immunisation (EPI). The responsibility for conducting causality assessment lies with the National Immunisation Safety Expert Committee (NISEC), appointed by the Minister of Health.
15. In line with manufacturers' requirements for procurement of COVID-19 vaccines, the No Fault Compensation Fund (NFCF) was established. Where the AEFI is deemed by NISEC to be causally linked to COVID-19 vaccination, the case is forwarded to the NFCF to be considered for compensation.
16. The claims process is legally mandated to remain active until all pending AEFIs reported following COVID-19 vaccination have been evaluated and claims addressed, with an estimated duration of 24 to 30 months. Consequently, procedures for investigating and assessing the causality of AEFIs related to COVID-19 vaccination and for handling of NFCF claims will be maintained.
17. NFCF coverage applies exclusively to AEFIs as a result of the administration of COVID-19 vaccines obtained through the National Vaccination Programme ending 29th February 2024. Responsibility for claims resulting from AEFIs following administration of adult vaccines will fall upon manufacturers, following standard practices for medicines and other vaccines.
18. Provincial Departments are responsible for reporting AEFIs, investigation of serious/severe events, making preliminary causality assessments, maintaining provincial AEFI line-lists and providing feedback to AEFI reporter.
19. Provincial Departments are requested to ensure that all information necessary to process assessments is submitted timeously, and that feedback is provided to persons who have submitted reports.



**DR SSS BUTHELEZI**  
**DIRECTOR-GENERAL: HEALTH**

DATE: 14/03/2024