

Statement of the Gauteng Provincial Command Council on the adherence to the 21-Day lockdown regulations and further measures to be taken to flatten the curve

29 March 2020

On 22 March 2020, President Cyril Ramaphosa declared a national lockdown in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The lockdown came into effect on Friday, 26 March 2020. This extra ordinary measure marked a critical intervention by the national government aimed at ensuring that all sectors of society work together in flattening the curve of COVID-19. This moment provided the Gauteng Provincial Government an opportunity to explore alternative ways of engagement between communities, business and government.

The creative industry has led the way in ensuring that they use technology to relay messages of support, whilst keeping society entertained through online events. Today we are witnessing churches congregating using livestreaming. This is groundbreaking for many faith-based organisations who have had to move away from conventional church services and embrace the new normal.

This pandemic has in many ways forced government to embrace the centrality of technological advancements in delivering services to the people. The Executive Council and the Executive Management Team are using video-conferencing and collaborative platforms to fast-track service delivery programmes.

As of tomorrow, Monday 30 March, 86 507 vulnerable beneficiaries will receive grants from 300 Post Offices across the province. The Post Office will make available 5000 litres of hand sanitisers for the elderly and 30 000 pairs of hand gloves for the staff. Seven hundred thousand (700 000) beneficiaries will receive their grants directly through their bank accounts or agencies such as Shoprite/Checkers. 1757 beneficiaries will receive their grants in cash from nine pay-points across the province. There are 648 495 people receiving old age grants in Gauteng. The total number of people receiving disability grants is 120 163. Altogether, 768 658 people will receive social grants over the next two days. The Provincial government is currently utilising geo-mapping technology to enhance its contact tracing efforts to trace people that might have been in contact with confirmed positive cases. Thus far, we have 82% successful tracing of the known contacts. Tracers are also being trained on the utilisation of the Mpilo App to trace contacts of confirmed COVID-19 cases.

There are currently 15 patients in hospital in the province; 6 in public and 9 in private health facilities. One patient is in ICU, and is recovering well. Over the past two days we have witnessed a general compliance to the measures announced by the President. However, there have also been incidents in shopping centers and public transport nodes where social distancing was not adhered to.

In response to this, the Gauteng Executive Council has decided to use Community Policing Forums (CPFs) and 3000 community patrollers who will be activated to assist citizens of Gauteng in managing queues in malls, shopping centers and in other hotspots. These patrollers will also be deployed to pay-points of Social grants beneficiaries. Over the past 3 days, the South African Police Services (SAPS) has made 148 arrests which consist of residents who failed to adhere to the lockdown regulations.

The Provincial government, in co-ordination with the transport sector will continue to ensure that workers who provide critical services get to work with ease and in compliance to the regulations. The co-ordination will also include the monitoring of adhering to COVID-19 safety measures including sanitising taxi ranks and providing sanitisers to taxis. As part of the measures to respond to flattening the curve, we have so far trained 4437 community healthcare workers. As indicated before, this number will be up scaled to 9000.

The Provincial government is currently embarking on a recruitment drive of over 400 healthcare workers across various disciplines. We call upon health professionals to avail their skills to help contain the spread of the virus. We applaud the work of NGO's in assisting vulnerable groups by providing housing and essential necessities.

We also thank those patriotic South Africans who have come to the fore in these trying times and donated with their time and much needed resources. The Gauteng Province has set-up COVID-19 donations hotline, the number is 072 633 0515 and the email is covid19.donations@gauteng.gov.za. However, the provincial government will not be taking any financial contributions. All financial contributions should be directed to the Solidary Response Fund set up by the national government on www.solidarityfund.co.za

We once more call upon Gauteng residents to continue adhering to the COVID-19 measures as outlined by government by staying at home. Working together, we can flatten the curve and contain the spread of COVID-19.

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