



GAUTENG PROVINCE

HEALTH
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

MEDIA STATEMENT

MONDAY, 06 FEBRUARY 2023

MEC NKOMO – RALEHOKO CALLS ON GAUTENG RESIDENTS NOT TO PANIC FOLLOWING CHOLERA CASES

The Gauteng MEC for Health and Wellness, Nomantu Nkomo-Ralehoko has called on Gauteng residents not to panic following the announcement of two confirmed Cholera cases that were reported on 1st and 3rd February in Johannesburg.

“The situation is under control. Our outbreak response teams have been activated and we have increased surveillance efforts. The Gauteng Department of Health is working closely with the National Institute for Communicable Diseases, World Health Organisation and the National Department of Health to closely monitor the Cholera cases,” assured MEC Nkomo-Ralehoko.

The two confirmed cases are sisters who had travelled together from Johannesburg on 15 January 2023 to Malawi to attend a funeral service and returned by bus on 30 January 2023. Both sisters had developed symptoms on their return to Johannesburg.

One of the sisters presented to a local clinic and was later admitted in hospital on 31 January 2023. During the case investigation and follow-up of close contacts, the sister reported that she also developed diarrhoea whilst travelling back from Malawi but it resolved within a day and she did not seek medical care. In a bid to prevent the spread of Cholera infections the department’s outbreak response teams have visited households for the identified cases and those of the 18 contacts, who will be followed up for 5 days as part of standard protocol.

Furthermore, the department is currently conducting advocacy and health education as part of its social mobilisation drive to the respective households.

Cholera is an acute enteric infection caused by the bacteria *Vibrio cholerae*, and an outbreak usually occurs in settings with inadequate sanitation and insufficient access to safe drinking water. It spreads mainly through contaminated or polluted water. People can become infected directly through drinking contaminated water, or indirectly through eating contaminated food. The infection is often mild or without symptoms but can sometimes be severe and life-threatening. It typically causes acute watery diarrhoea and can affect people of all ages.

“It is important that we encourage communities to practice proper hand-hygiene which includes thorough washing of hands with water and soap before and after using the bathroom and also when preparing or eating food.

“We further plead with community members to visit the nearest health facilities in case they present mild to severe and watery diarrhoea and dehydration symptoms,” stated MEC Nkomo – Ralehoko.

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Issued by the Gauteng Department of Health

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