



GAUTENG PROVINCE

HEALTH
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

MEDIA STATEMENT

TO: All Media

ATT: News Editors, Health Reporters

For immediate release

Tuesday, 19 May 2020

COVID-19 IMPACTS ON HEALTH SERVICES IN GAUTENG

As a result of the emergence of COVID–19 pandemic the Gauteng Department of Health (GDoH) has observed an increase in the number of TB and HIV patients that have defaulted on their medication since the 27 March 2020 lockdown period.

This has exacerbated the loss-to-follow-up (LTFU) rate of TB and HIV patients which has remained a challenge nationally since the beginning of the health programmes owing to a number of factors such as high mobility, incorrect and unreliable addresses due to fear of stigma around TB and HIV.

The approximate number of patients that failed to collect their TB medicines is 1 090, while the number of patients that failed to collect their antiretroviral medicines is approximately 10 950. Since the lockdown the average percentage reduction in medicine collections for TB is 1.4% and 19.6% for HIV.

The department has developed and is implementing a track and trace plan to locate patients that have not come to collect their treatment and manage them accordingly. Through the Ward Based Outreach Teams; patients are followed up and given their treatment. Those requiring follow up for bloods are advised to report to the facility. Daily

the WBOT verifies to ensure that those referred have indeed reported to the facility for their follow up.

The anticipated impact of treatment gaps for TB and HIV/Aids because of the lockdown measures are; Supply and transportation of medicines may be disrupted by flight cancellations and imposed travel restrictions. The unavailability of medicines may lead to treatment interruption which subsequently cause drug resistance and deterioration of patients' health. Patients that do not comply with treatment remain vulnerable and may be susceptible to other opportunistic infections; SARS CoV – 2 being one of them. Lastly clinicians may have difficulty managing patients with unsuppressed viral loads due to treatment interruption. Such patients may end up developing complications such as Immune Reconstitution Inflammatory Syndrome (IRIS) and many other illnesses.

Update on surgical procedures at Charlotte Maxeke Johannesburg Academic Hospital (CMJAH)

CMJAH remains one of the busiest COVID-19 treating facilities in the province. The GDoH has put some measures in place to ensure some of the critical services are rendered at other facilities in order to free up resources at the hospital.

Alternative arrangements have been made for less complex cases to be performed at Helen Joseph Hospital and other regional hospitals. Specialists (nursing and medical) from CMJAH help to strengthen capacity when needed at these other facilities. There is unfortunately limited capacity for patients who would require post-operative ICU and High Care.

Cancer operations are continuing in all departments, divisions and units. There are few cancer procedures which have been deferred because the number of theatre lists available per week have been reduced. Similarly, paediatric operations are predominately semi-urgent and are therefore continuing.

There are some procedures due to their complexities cannot be done anywhere else except at CMJAH. These patients unfortunately have co-morbidities and therefore are at higher risk in case they get infected with COVID-19.

Operations have been cancelled or deferred since the lockdown on 27 March 2020:

Department	Number of cancellations
Orthopaedics	Total: 183
a) Arthroplasty	a) 80.
b) Spine	b) 20.
c) Paediatric	c) 56.
d) Foot & Ankle	d) 12.
e) Sports	e) 15.
Ophthalmology	499
Gastrointestinal Endoscopy (Gastroscopy, Colonoscopy, ERCP)	420
Breast	30
Thyroid	9 (5 cancers)
Sarcoma	0
Parathyroid	2
General Surgery	5
Salivary gland	5
Surgical Gastroenterology	22
ENT	6
Paediatric Surgery	47
Plastic Surgery	0
Neurosurgery	22
Urology	Total: 32

a) Open	8
b) Local/Cystoscopies	22
c) Extra-corporeal SW lithotripsy	0
d) Laser	2
Urology endoscopy	23
Cardiothoracic surgery	32 (Cardiac 20: Thoracic 12)
Trauma (elective)	14
Vascular Surgery	28
Transplant	0
Melanoma	1
Maxillofacial surgery	33
TOTAL	1413

Ends/

For more information, contact

Kwara Kekana, Spokesperson: MEC for Health

074 054 3826 or Kwara.Kekana@gauteng.gov.za

OR

Philani Mhlungu, Media Liaison Officer: MEC for Health

060 961 2627 or Philani.Mhlungu@gauteng.gov.za

For media releases, speeches and news visit the Gauteng Department of Health's portal at www.gauteng.gov.za