

South Africa's vaccine rollout strategy

Health Minister Dr Zweli Mkhize says government has set up structures to expedite the financing, sourcing and procurement of a vaccine for COVID-19.

During a media briefing on Sunday evening, Mkhize, along with Ministerial Advisory Committee on Vaccines chairman Professor Barry Schoub and Health Department DDG Dr Anban Pillay, presented South Africa's vaccine rollout strategy, and announcing that the country's first batch will become available soon.

"We believe that vaccines have to be made available to all the South Africans, starting with frontline health care workers and the most vulnerable to ensure there is protection for them first as the most vulnerable groups. The vaccines will need to be made available quickly so that most of our citizens are covered by the end of the first year of rollout- this year," Mkhize said.

"We therefore want to assure the public that we are very mindful of the urgency, particularly as we feel the impact of the second wave we are currently experiencing."

Government is targeting a minimum of 67% of the population to achieve herd immunity and the approach will be a phased rollout of the vaccine, beginning with the most vulnerable in the population.

The first phase targets frontline health care workers, with a target population of about 1,250,000. Phase two will accommodate essential workers, persons in congregate settings, the elderly and those over the age of 18 who have comorbidities. The third phase will target South Africans over the age of 18.

This means that by the end of phase 3, more than 40-million citizens will have been immunized, which is equivalent to approximately 67,25% of the population.

"At this stage we have secured the doses that will be acquired through COVAX which will ensure that we immunize 10% of the population through this mechanism and we expect the processes will have delivered the vaccine by beginning of second quarter," Mkhize said.

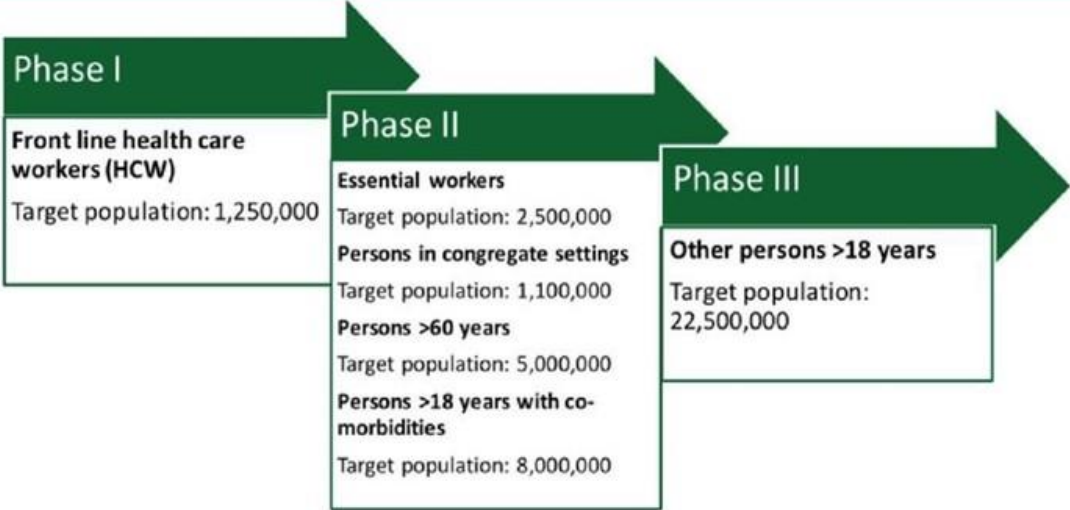
"Having secured for 10% of the population, we have embarked on other efforts to get the rest of the 57% of the population to be targeted by the end 2021 but, more importantly we are making efforts to obtain vaccines much earlier, hopefully as early as February 2021."

Describing how the vaccines will be distributed once they arrive, Pillay said there are a number of structures which have been put in place to govern the process. This includes working closely with provincial departments, district health teams and the private health sector.

“When we supply, we need to monitor and track the stock and the vaccine uptake use and coverage. Vaccine must also be monitored for perceived adverse events so we need an effective monitoring system for that. The vaccine rollout will be led nationally, there will be one procurement approach and we will then work with our provincial colleagues and the private sector for distribution,” Pillay said.


“We’re looking at three platforms to deliver the vaccines. The first is a work-based vaccine programme. This will work very well for our hospital based staff particularly public and private hospitals at district level. Second is an outreach based vaccination programme and here we will be having mobile teams moving from facility to facility. We would also be establishing vaccination centres in remote areas.”

The vaccine will be given out in 3 PHASES:



Phase I	Phase II	Phase III
Front line health care workers (HCW) Target population: 1,250,000	Essential workers Target population: 2,500,000 Persons in congregate settings Target population: 1,100,000 Persons >60 years Target population: 5,000,000 Persons >18 years with co-morbidities Target population: 8,000,000	Other persons >18 years Target population: 22,500,000

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PHASE 2 of the vaccine rollout:

ESSENTIAL WORKERS

Target population: **2 500 000**

Who are they?

Police officers, miners and workers in the security, retail food, funeral, teachers, banking and essential municipal and home affairs, border control and port health services.

PERSONS IN CONGREGATE SETTINGS

Target population: **1 100 000**

Who are they?

Persons care homes, detention centres, shelters and prisons. In addition, people working in the hospitality and tourism industry, and educational institutions are also at risk.

PERSONS 60 YEARS AND OLDER

Target population: **5 000 000**

PERSONS OLDER THAN 18 YEARS WITH CO-MORBIDITIES

Target population: **8 000 000**

Who are they?

Persons living with uncontrolled diabetics, chronic lung disease, poorly controlled cardiovascular disease, renal disease, HIV, tuberculosis and obesity.

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