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COVID-19 news from SAMED, Government and Abroad.

## COVID-19 DEVELOPMENTS

### TRACKING THE PANDEMIC



### [SA's drop in COVID-19 cases 'very promising', says top expert - but warns against complacency](#)

- South Africa has seen a steady decline in the number of new COVID-19 cases over the last two weeks, **Professor Salim Abdool Karim**, epidemiologist and infectious diseases specialist and chair of the South African Ministerial Advisory Committee on COVID-19 said on Thursday.
- While in late July, the country experienced a rise of around 12 000 to 13 000 new cases per day, this number has dropped to under 6 000 as we reach mid-August.
- Karim drew on hospital data, predominantly from the private sector and several public hospitals, to show the decline in the number of hospital admissions over the last couple of days.
- "The answer to that is not a clear-cut one," said Karim. "We are particularly concerned about the risk of a second surge. In fact, if anything really concerns me at this stage, it's the [possibility of a] second surge and how the epidemic may play out over the next several weeks."
- Comparing South Africa's infection rates to those of Germany, the US and Spain, Karim explained that Germany – which had one of the best global responses to the crisis as they contained the epidemic quite quickly – experienced a rapid increase in cases, followed by a decline, and have since maintained a low level.
- Looking at where we are in SA with case numbers, Karim said that if SA can get to the same point that Germany has reached, where case numbers remain steadily low, we can be more confident. As it stands, we do still have the potential to experience a second surge, Karim added.

### [MAC scientists raise concerns over second wave of COVID-19 infections](#)

- With growing calls for President Cyril Ramaphosa to further ease lockdown regulations to level two, the country's top scientists have expressed overwhelming concern over a possible second wave.
- The country has seen a significant decline in the number of daily new COVID-19 infections over the past few weeks, while worker unions are calling on more sectors of the economy to reopen to save jobs.
- "The work is not done yet," said Professor Glenda Gray, like many other specialists, has raised the red flag about a possible second surge in the number of COVID-19 cases.
- Gray said that for South Africa to contain the pandemic in the future and to prevent a second outbreak, she suggested that experts revisited the testing strategy. "Back into community testing, tracking and tracing, hot spot evaluation, put out the fires."

### [Healthcare workers latest statistics](#)

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having contacted the virus

- Of a total number of confirmed COVID cases in the healthcare sector, 21 333 (78%) cases were reported in the public sector, while 6 027 (22%) were from the private sector. "The overall infection rate amongst healthcare workers as compared to the total number of cases identified nationally as 5% which is well below the global average of 10%.
- A further breakdown revealed that more than half (52%) of the healthcare workers who tested positive were nurses, while 6% (1644) were doctors.
- 37 deaths were recorded in the private sector and 203 were from the public sector. This translated to a mortality rate of 0.9% among healthcare workers.
- "We salute these fallen soldiers and pay tribute to them for their commitment to serving the people of South Africa right now until the very end."

#### [Makhura urges Gauteng not to let their guard down](#)

- Gauteng needs to continue conducting itself and behaving like it is still the epicentre of COVID in South Africa – the province must do this even though there is a reduction in the rate of infections, says Premier David Makhura.
- The provincial advisory committee revealed at a briefing that there was a new modelling and infection trajectory, suggesting that the province was able to handle the surge and that cases were now declining.
- But Makhura cautioned that even though there seemed to be a light at the end of the COVID tunnel, it is still early days and people should not let their guard down because of the province's size and population density.

#### **ECONOMY, POLITICS, ENVIRONMENT, SOCIETY**

##### [Gauteng govt has returned to open tender system - Makhura](#)

- Gauteng was using the open tender system prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. but because of the urgent need for personal protective equipment (PPE), the province used national government's emergency procurement process, a process that Makhura said created loopholes for corruption.
- Makhura said that together with provincial Treasury they had taken the approach of increasing transparency in the procurement process.
- "For accountability and transparency, every month we will publish every new tender that has been adjudicated and awarded by any department in Gauteng. This is public information that must be known," he said. The premier said that the COVID-19 corruption allegations had discredited every effort made by the province towards clean governance.

##### [New UIF coronavirus payouts start next week – here's what changed](#)

- The Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF) will start to process new claims for the Covid-19 Temporal Employee Relief Scheme (TERS) from Monday, August 17. The TERS scheme, which is meant to help pay salaries during the pandemic, had been due to end in June, but was recently extended.
- The new benefits will cover claims for the period for 1 July to 15 August, but will only cover employees whose employers are:
  - not permitted to commence operations under lockdown regulations
  - unable to make alternative arrangements for vulnerable workers (those above the age of 60 years, or with co-morbidities), such as working from home
  - unable to make use of their services because of the coronavirus restrictions, for example on how many employees can be in the workplace at the same time.
- All claims must be lodged via [the TERS online portal](#).
- "In keep with strict governance principles, we will still subject payments to bank verification prior to releasing the funds into the applicant's accounts. The immediate past has taught us that even under the pandemic, criminals are at large and looking to benefit through their nefarious means," said UIF Commissioner Teboho Maruping.

##### [Imported frozen foods may have caused New Zealand's new coronavirus outbreak](#)

- New Zealand reported its first case of COVID-19 in more than 100 days on Tuesday. It's possible the virus arrived via imported food packages. The country's health officials suggested the new outbreak may be linked to these frozen goods because one of the infected patients works at a store that orders such items from overseas, [Reuters reported on Thursday](#).
- Chinese officials reported similar news this week: Traces of the virus were found on frozen shrimp and chicken-wing packages imported from Ecuador and Brazil, respectively. The municipal health commission in Shenzhen, where officials detected the contaminated chicken-wing packages, warned residents to be "cautious in buying imported frozen meat products and aquatic products in recent days," [according to NBC News](#).

virus can help to extend the period of time that it stays infectious, which is why we think that outbreaks at meatpacking plants were occurring so frequently, but transmission via surfaces still appears to be rare — even when those surfaces are frozen or refrigerated."

- "Throughout the entire pandemic so far, there has continued to be shipping of products all over the world. If transmission via surfaces — whether frozen or refrigerated or not — were a major driver of infection, we would be seeing many case reports on it," Howell said, adding, "the fact that we're not suggests that it is not a major route of infection." Indeed, the CDC says the virus "[does not spread easily](#)" from contaminated surfaces, though the agency continues to recommend that people "routinely clean and disinfect" high-touch surfaces just in case.

#### Bartenders turn to carwash as a result of COVID

- The COVID-19 pandemic and resulting lockdown have hit the South African service industry hard. A group of bartenders from Cape Town took the concept of "pivot" to heart and have started a new hustle — a car wash. The impressive group of women all worked at Cape Town's successful bars and restaurants, which have not been allowed to open and serve alcohol. Instead, they decided to apply their hospitality know-how to a different service sector, providing top-of-the-line car washing services in Woodstock. Thus, [The Cartenders](#) were born.
- The business operates from a 'workshop' in Walmer Estate and has already become more than just a car wash. The car wash is run by individuals who understand hospitality and live for making people happy.
- "The ambience is cool, welcoming and comfortable, the space is geared with the necessities for our customers to do whatever they want — may it be getting some work done, have a Zoom meeting, chill out and read a book, or even catch a quick snooze on our couch (yes that has happened twice before already!) — we make the car wash experience as convenient as possible for our customers. We are also kid and pet friendly!"
- Customers have access to WiFi, popcorn, coffee and tea, and fun activity sheets to make the wait part of the experience a breeze.




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## COVID-19 EVENTS

### REGISTER: FINANCIAL MODEL - PARTNERSHIPS FOR COVID-19 IN AFRICA


COVID-19 has put a strain on the 2030 agenda and closing the health financing gap. With the world coming to a standstill, 2020 is a year to reflect and re-prioritize financing mechanisms and models to improve healthcare access and equity. This includes the challenges that organizations and entrepreneurs










## Partnerships for COVID-19 in Africa

14th August 2020  
4.00pm - 5.30pm EAT



### Financing Models

				
<b>Moderator</b>	<b>Keynote Speaker</b>	<b>Speaker</b>	<b>Speaker</b>	<b>Speaker</b>
Ms. Zola Mtshiya Director Africa Healthcare Federation	Prof. Khama Rogo Founder Africa Institute for Health Transformation	Dr. Justine Coulson Deputy Regional Director East & Southern Africa UNFPA	Dr. Philippe Francois Global Head of Life&Health International Reinsurance Business Development AXA	Ms. Oluranti Doherty Head Export Development African Export-Import Bank

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