

CLOSING REMARKS BY HEALTH DEPUTY MINISTER DR JOE PHAAHLA, FRIDAY 23 JULY 2021

- Thank you Programme Director and greetings to my colleague Acting Minister Kubayi
- Let me thank all panelists from our stakeholders for their continued support to government`s efforts to fight this pandemic.
- Indeed, despite the recent incidents of the unrests in Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal, vaccination rollout programme has gained momentum to reach as many people as possible (both with registrations and vaccinations)
- In line with President Cyril Ramaphosa`s call for daily vaccination of at least 300 000 people, we are working closely with various stakeholders including the private sector, civil society amongst others to increase the capacity to vaccinate as many people as possible.
- As the number of vaccination sites increases to accommodate people who are unable to vaccinate during the week, we urge people to go out in numbers to vaccinate.

VACCINE SAFETY QUESTIONS

- We have noted the reports and circulating social media messages which question safety of Covid-19 vaccine and their linkage with adverse side effects and deaths
- Some of these information serve to create a doubt about safety of the vaccines and conclude that people who died after receiving a jab could be due to vaccines,

- Although some people, especially those with other health conditions, could have died due to reactions or side effects, but studies are yet to conclude a direct and immediate linkage between vaccine and deaths.
- COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective, although they may not be 100% against the virus, but remain a better prevention weapon against the pandemic in the absence of the best
- All vaccine approved for use in South Africa are first subjected to a rigorous scientific standards for safety, effectiveness and manufacturing quality, thus there is no need to panic.
- We call upon people to show patriotism towards vaccine roll-out programme and be the messengers of positive and life changing information instead of creating vaccine hesitancy through fake news and misinformation.
- Anyone who contribute to the spread of misinformation, is equally contributing to avoidable infections and deaths, and this is a crime.