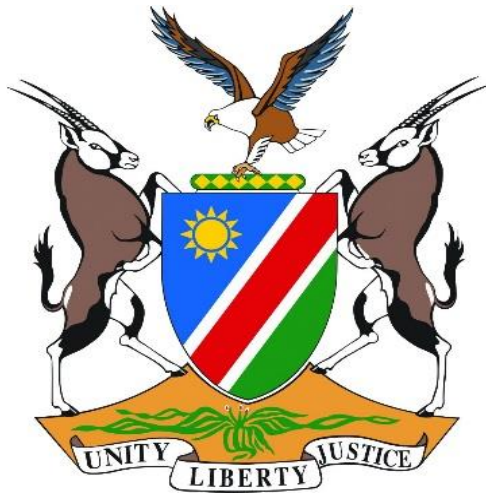


REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

**STATEMENT BY DR KALUMBI SHANGULA, (MP) MINISTER OF HEALTH AND
SOCIAL SERVICES ON OCCASION OF THE 42nd COVID-19 PUBLIC BRIEFING.**

13 APRIL 2022

**STATE HOUSE
WINDHOEK**

**Check Against Delivery.*

Your Excellency, Dr. Hage G. Geingob, President of the Republic of Namibia
Your Excellency, Dr. Nangolo Mbumba, Vice President
Right Honourable Prime Minister, Dr Saara Kuugongelwa-Amadhila
Honourable Ministers
Members of the Media,
Fellow Namibians,

1. I thank you Your Excellency, for giving me the floor. It is appropriate to underscore the strong overall leadership that our President has provided in combating the COVID-19 pandemic since it reached our shores in 2020.
2. As at 12 April 2022, Namibia has recorded a total of 157 914 COVID- 19 cases out of the 992 038 samples tested. Active cases have increased from 222 during the previous briefing to 296 current. Unfortunately, seven (7) lives were lost since the last briefing, bringing the number of deaths to 4 021 since the beginning of the pandemic.
3. The number of deaths decreased from 19 deaths reported during the preceding 28 days to 7 deaths reported during the period of 25 days of this dispensation, a decline of 63.2%. Moreover, the number of COVID-19 patients admitted to hospitals congruently decreased to an average of 12 per day as compared to 22 reported during the preceding 25 days. Similarly, the number of COVID-19 patients admitted to Intensive Care Units (ICUs) has dropped from 4 to 0 cases by 12 April 2022.
4. On 11 April 2022, Botswana announced the presence of a new sub lineage of Omicron variant in four individuals, which has been designated as Omicron BA.4 and BA.5. This sub lineage of Omicron has been detected previously in South Africa, Denmark, Scotland and England from 10 January 2022. This variant is still being studied in terms of disease spread and virulence.
5. The Laboratory Pillar of the COVID-19 response in Namibia is working closely with UNAM for Genomic surveillance and testing of samples from school clusters. So far, 37 samples have been submitted to UNAM for genomic sequencing.
6. The Ministry continues to take advantage of low case numbers to build capacity for emergency case management. As an example, five (5) healthcare workers recently attended a training on Basic Emergency Care in Nairobi, Kenya, through WHO support. Plans are underway to cascade the Basic Emergency Care and Emergency Management Training to Hospitals and other health facilities before the beginning of winter.

7. In terms of logistics, the current stock levels of different items and commodities is adequate at national and regional levels for current needs. The Procurement and Logistic Pillar has assessed the supply mapping system, the capacity of logistics staff, and storage or warehousing space at national and regional levels. They have also assessed transport capacity as part of preparedness and response strategy. The Ministry will use this low caseload period to carry out maintenance of equipment and vehicles.
8. The inter-Ministerial vaccination mobilisation campaign, led jointly by the Ministry of Health and Social Services, Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture, Ministry of Information, Communication and Technology and with support from the Ministry of Home Affairs, Immigration, Safety and Security was launched in Windhoek on 25 March 2022. The campaign is making headway in mobilising learners 12-17 years and teachers for vaccination. Since then, the campaign has been launched in other regions and will run for a period of six (6) months.
9. The global target is to vaccinate 70% of countries' populations to make an impact on the pandemic. At home, by 10th April 2022, a total of 467 148 persons have received at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine nationally. Of these, 465 914 are persons aged 18 years and above, while 16 210 are children aged 12-17 years old. Collectively, 399 304 (22.4%) eligible persons are fully vaccinated countrywide. The average daily vaccination uptake keeps fluctuating but remains very low low at 491 for the first dose, and 191 for the second dose per day.
10. The school vaccination campaigns have ignited a positive movement for vaccination among youth in Namibia. As at 12 April 2022, of the **467 148** first doses administered in the country, **16 796 (3.6%)** were children and adolescents 12-17 years. The early lessons from this campaign show eagerness from the youth to get vaccinated, once they are fully educated and provided with factual information about the vaccines and their benefits.
11. Scientific evidence points to added benefit of boosters or additional doses. As of 12 April 2022, the total number of eligible persons who have received booster doses in Namibia stood at 47 829, a 56.5% increase, from the 30 554 the Ministry announced during the last briefing. Therefore, we continue to implore more people to enhance their protection by going for the booster vaccines.
12. In terms of vaccine stock, I assure the nation that Namibia has enough stock of vaccines. As at 5 April 2022, the stock level at Central Medical Store was 746 290 doses of Sinopharm, AstraZeneca, J&J and Pfizer, combined.

13. The Ministry of Health and Social Services, in collaboration with the African Union and Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC), with technical support from the PanaBios Consortium, has implemented an online system to authenticate and verify travellers' COVID-19 certificates. This system was launched in November 2021. In addition, the Ministry has been collaborating with PanaBios, as the technical lead, to further customize the Trusted Vaccine as an additional interdependent package, used to issue digital vaccination certificates. This process has progressed well. We are working to officially launch the implementation of the digital vaccination certificate in the next two weeks or earlier.
14. We have engaged our South African counterparts regarding a notice, informing travelers to be in possession of Vaccination Certificates and not Vaccination Cards for entry into South Africa or to present a negative PCR Test result obtained not later than 72 hours prior to travel. We have updated them on our situation and have requested them for an interim relief.
15. I now provide further information on the amendments to the Public Health COVID-19 General Regulations: Public and Environmental Health Act, 2015 for the period of 16 April to 15 May 2022, as announced by the President. Those measures not amended will continue to be in force.
16. **New public health and social measures**
 - 16.1. **Duration**

The duration of the new public health measures will run from **16 April to 15 May 2022**.
 - 16.2. **Gatherings**

The number of attendees at public gatherings remains unchanged at 1000 persons per event. Namibians are advised to maintain physical distance and depending on the size of the venue, the number of attendees should be adjusted accordingly to comply with the minimum requirement of physical distancing.
 - 16.3. **Education**

Measures related to education remain unchanged. We advise teachers, other staff members and eligible learners to get vaccinated and to observe all public health and social measures, especially wearing of masks when in closed settings like a classroom. We have seen of late clusters of cases in schools.

- 17.** I wish to dispel the narrative that the recently reported cases of scabies are a result of Covid-19 vaccines. Scabies have been in the country and in the world for many years before the advent of Covid-19 and before the production of Covid-19 vaccines. The public is implored not to believe such rumours.

- 18.** I reiterate the message that winter is around then corner. When it gets cold, people tend to be close together and in closed settings. Under such conditions, the transmission of Covid-19 is enhanced. In preparation for the winter period, let us get vaccinated and continue to observe public health and social measures.

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