



COUNCIL OF GOVERNORS

7th April, 2021

PRESS STATEMENT ON THE CORONA VIRUS PANDEMIC

The Council of Governors Health Committee today held a consultative meeting with HIV/AIDS high burden Counties to discuss the HIV Stock-out concern. The meeting resolved that ARVS have to be availed to the people urgently because currently, there are Counties with zero HIV commodities. This therefore means that the viral suppression of the people who are taking ARVs is compromised and increases their chances of dying due to HIV related complications.

Currently there are serious challenges with the Paediatric ARV regimen. The component of this regimen called KALETRA is missing in totality in the Country. This means that children are not accessing the full range of ARVs. This will lead to treatment failure among the children. In this regard, the meeting has requested NASCOP to provide guidelines directing the inclusion of NEVIRAPINE into the Paediatric regimen. We note that changing of ARV regimen in the short term is not advisable as it will lead to resistance of the drug.

We also note that currently we are not able to test for viral load. This presents a gap in the fight against HIV and is likely to result to more HIV related deaths. In the long term, the Counties are committed to discuss the sustainability of HIV interventions in the Country. In light of declining development partner support, there is need to increase domestic financing and production of ARV commodities. Therefore the Council will convene an urgent intergovernmental meeting on Monday 12th April, 2021 between the National Treasury, MoH, NASCOP and other relevant stakeholders to discuss the prevailing situation and agree on the process that will initialize preparations of long term measures.

COUNTY GOVERNMENT RESPONSE MEASURES TO THE PANDEMIC

In the last one week there has been a decline in the COVID-19 infections bringing the positivity rate to 15.1 % down from 22% in the previous weeks. This is indication of good progress in combating the virus in the Country which is attributed to the lockdown and stringent measures introduced by H.E The President.

We therefore urge members of the public to continue adhering to the preventive measures in place. On the other hand, the National and County Governments will continue to enforce the health protocols to further reduce the positivity rate in the Country.

In the last one week, the 47 County Governments have addressed themselves to the following critical issues:-

1. Status of bed capacity in 15 Counties

The bed capacity in 41 Counties is as follows:-

- There is a total of **8,073 beds** in 188 isolation centers out of which **6,159 beds** are available for patients;
- There are a total of **417 beds** in the ICU out of which **259 beds** are available for new patients; and
- There are a total of **186 beds** in the HDU out of which **104 beds** are available for new patients.

2. Status of Oxygen supply

Cumulatively in 47 Counties, there are **58 oxygen plants** out of which 42 are functional. A total of **2,828 oxygen cylinders** and **730 concentrators** are available. Additionally, there are **3,601 isolation beds** connected to oxygen across the 47 Counties.

3. COVID-19 Vaccination

Cumulatively in 41 Counties, a total of **395, 096 doses** have been received out of which **341, 520 doses** have been administered as follows:-

- Healthcare workers – **70,883**
- Security – **120,975**
- Teachers – **33,759**

- Others – **115,903**

We urge frontline workers and the elderly who are yet to be vaccinated to ensure that they receive the jab as the same is aimed at reducing severe illness and death from COVID-19.

4. Testing and Home-Based Care

Out of **102,980 tests** carried out in 41 Counties, **15,007** tested positive. Of this number, **5,856** positive cases are under home-based care while **7,071** are in isolation facilities across 41 counties. A total of **35,050** have recovered from COVID -19

5. Renewal of contracts of Healthcare workers

In order to ensure smooth delivery of services during this pandemic, the Ministry of Health through the Public Service Commission in consultation with the Council of Governors has granted authority for renewal of contracts of all the Healthcare workers who were engaged in the management of COVID-19 across the 47 Counties for another six (6) months commencing April to September, 2021.

Further, the Ministry is working closely with County Governments to ensure that healthcare workers who terminated their contracts are replaced immediately to ensure that service delivery is not affected. The two levels of Government are in discussion to see if the contracts of the health workers still in service can be extended for one year.

6. Implementation of County COVID-19 Social Economic Reengineering and Recovery Strategy

County Governments have embarked on implementation of the Strategy which aims at supporting key sectors as well as creating innovative interventions that seek to address the varied implications of COVID-19 to the economy.

So far 5 Counties namely; **Nakuru, Embu, Lamu, Machakos and Nyeri** have rolled out interventions which have multiplier effects on productivity and employment creation. These initiatives include Tax relief in the following

areas:- Waivers of penalties, land rates, market fees, bodaboda fees and Trade license.

7. Food Security

We affirm that there is adequate food supply in the Country and prices have been retained in most markets across the 47 Counties. However, the delayed long rainy season has affected all Counties especially ASAL Counties. These Counties are now tracking water, providing relief food and cash transfers to support the affected families. These Counties are doing this in very difficult circumstances since the equitable share from the National Treasury has been delayed for 4 consecutive months.

Therefore to enhance the efforts by the County Governments, we call upon the National Government, Development partners and the private sector to support Counties to ensure the affected citizens have access to basic needs.

8. County Governments Call Centers

In the wake of the 3rd wave of COVID-19, Counties have reactivated the 24 hour toll free call centers for example, the County Government of Kisumu has reloaded their call center to handle a bigger capacity of calls.

9. Transport Sector

County Governments have continued to enforce the health protocols by providing hand washing and sanitization facilities at the bus stations and stop-overs along the transport corridor. Additionally, ad-hoc and impromptu roadside health checks are being undertaken in all Counties to ensure compliance with Government regulations on COVID-19.

Further, Counties have enhanced surveillance activities including 24-hour surveillance at border points as well as within the community using syndromic screening. Counties have also strengthened Inter-county information systems for tracking and data sharing.

Challenges

1. Disbursement of County Equitable share of revenue

Despite being in the middle of a pandemic and two months to the end of the financial year, County Governments are yet to receive their equitable share as follows:

- **Ksh 7.2 Billion** owed to 12 Counties for the month of December
- **Ksh 26 Billion** owed to 47 Counties for the month of January
- **Ksh 26 Billion** owed to 47 Counties for the month of February
- **Ksh 26 Billion** owed to 47 Counties for the month of March

This delay has continued to slow down timely response to COVID-19 and other County operations have been impacted negatively. In this regard, the Council now strongly notify the National Treasury that this inordinate four month delay may lead to other drastic action since negotiations seem not to be heeded. The Council now demands for immediate disbursement of all the outstanding amounts owed to County Governments before the 15th of April 2021.

2. Traffic in border points

We note with concern the heavy human and truck traffic at the border points which poses a great risk in increasing community infections. We therefore urge the National and county governments to ensure speedy operations at border points to avoid overcrowding, taking into consideration road safety for freights and passenger movements.

3. Waste Management

We have recently seen the disposal of used Personal Protective Equipment's (PPEs) in the general municipal waste stream that is generated within urban areas. These kits which are highly infectious are being worn by garbage collectors hence posing a risk of contracting the virus.

To avert similar eventualities, County governments have strengthened their enforcement measures to ensure medical waste is managed in line with the Ministry of Health protocols and regulations. So far, **23** Counties have equipped county referral hospitals with autoclaves while **11** Counties are using microwave and **3** Counties are using incinerators to

facilitate treatment of medical waste generated in-situ. In as much as possible the use of incinerators should be discouraged.

Conclusion

We are hopeful that through concerted effort we will start to see the decline in the number of reported cases in the coming weeks for the curve to be flattened.

County Governments remain committed in the fight against COVID-19. However, we urge every individual to:-

- Continue wearing masks properly by covering the nose and mouth;
- Maintain social distance;
- Wash hands regularly with soap and running water; and
- Sanitize

Asante Sana!

Signed

H.E Hon. Prof. Anyang' Nyong'o, EGH
Chairman, Health Committee