



## COUNCIL OF GOVERNORS

4<sup>th</sup> August, 2021

### PRESS STATEMENT ON COUNTY GOVERNMENTS RESPONSE MEASURES TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

*Fellow Kenyans,*

*Members of the Press,*

The COVID- 19 pandemic continues to put a strain on;

- i. The County health systems;
- ii. The lives of Kenyans and ;
- iii. The Country is currently facing a resurgence of the 3<sup>rd</sup> wave.

Despite the sustained counter-measures by County Governments to address the pandemic, there is increased pressure from emerging variants, such as the delta variant, that are proving to be more transmissible and violent.

These variants have contributed significantly to the surge of infection rates noted in Western Kenya region. However, the region has been overtaken by the following 6 counties which have reported the highest number of infections;-

- **Nairobi City,**
- **Mombasa City**
- **Nakuru;**
- **Kiambu;**

- **Nyeri and;**
- **Kilifi**

Currently, the positivity rate is **15.4 %**. This is high and we must strive to reduce the rate to the WHO recommended rate of **below 5%** and thus flattening the curve.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, there is some good news. The testing capacity has been boosted in Counties with additional **17 PCR machines** distributed in the month of May.

I commend the Ministry of Health for availing the much needed PCR Machines.

On the same breathe, we appeal to the Ministry of Health to now go a step further by providing the Counties with the much needed testing reagents and rapid testing kits.

### **1. Impact of COVID-19 on Mental Health**

There has been an increase of mental health illnesses due to stress and anxiety associated with the impact of COVID-19.

One of the most prominent manifestations is the rise of suicide cases.

This has increased from **317** cases recorded annually in the past years to over **417** recorded this year.

To avert this trend, County Governments have heightened their surveillance and health promotion programs such as counselling aimed at addressing the mental health related issues.

Additionally, Counties are working closely with Community Health Volunteers (CHVs) to ensure the vulnerable groups access the necessary mental support where need arises.

## 2. Bed capacity

The bed capacity in 33 Counties during the last three (3) weeks is as follows:-

- i. **Isolation beds** – There is a total of **7,566** beds in Isolation facilities. Currently, **1,287** beds are occupied bringing the total number of available beds is **6,279**.
- ii. **ICU beds** – Cumulatively, there are **512** ICU beds in 31 Counties. Currently, **192** ICU beds are occupied bringing the total number of available beds to **320**. This therefore indicates that, there is an increase of patients who require critical Healthcare.
- iii. **HDU beds** – Cumulatively, there are **284** HDU beds in the facilities. Currently, **162** beds are occupied bringing the total number of available beds to **122**. This also indicates that the number of patients who require critical care has increased.

## 3. Oxygen Capacity

There has been a rise in the number of patients that require critical care and the demand for oxygen is very high.

To this end, County Governments are scaling up processes to avail medical oxygen especially at the level 4 and 5 hospitals.

This is being done in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, and our partners: **World Bank, USAID** and **Global Fund**.

Further, Counties have embarked on short term interventions including;

- Procurement of additional gaseous and liquid oxygen to match the increased demand,
- Extension of piped outlets and;
- Repair of non-functional oxygen generation plants.

These measures will be complemented with installation of additional plants.

We call upon Partners to continue working with County Governments in availing medical oxygen and infrastructure improvements in the health facilities.

#### **4. COVID-19 Vaccination**

As at **1<sup>st</sup> August, 2021**, a total of **1,062,413** vaccine doses have been administered which accounts for **21.1%** of phase 1 targeted population.

Additionally, a total of **661,314** people received the **2<sup>nd</sup>** dose of the vaccine which accounts for **62.2%** of total vaccinated in phase 1.

The vaccination roll-out is as follows:-

#### **For the 1st dose of vaccine -**

- Health Care Workers (HCW): **174,965**
- Security officers: **91,081**
- Teachers: **160,000**
- Above 58: **311,296**
- Others: **325,071**

## For the 2nd dose of vaccine -

- Health Care Workers (HCW): **115,540**
- Security officers: **52,801**
- Teachers: **95,918**
- Above 58: **204,513**
- Others: **192,542**

We are glad to note that there has been a higher uptake of the 2<sup>nd</sup> vaccine dose by the targeted population.

We urge the National Government to fast-track procurement and delivery of COVID- 19 vaccines to scale up efforts so as to achieve the targeted vaccination coverage of **10 million**.

### **5. Home-based care**

As at 1<sup>st</sup> August 2021, there were **2,225** patients under home-based isolation care across the Counties.

In this regard, we urge all asymptomatic patients to continue working with the Community Health Volunteers (CHVs) in the implementation of the home-based care guidelines.

## **NON- COVID-19 PANDEMIC ISSUES**

### **1. Drought Management**

Food and nutrition security in ASAL counties continues to deteriorate with arid areas severely affected due to the drought.

The drought is expected to continue until February 2022. This coupled with the impact of COVID-19 has threatened the livelihood of the ASAL population.

To address this issue, County Governments are implementing social protection initiatives including;

- Cash transfers,
- Supplementary feeding of vulnerable population and;
- Expanding water trucking to areas and institutions without water.

Further, County Governments are working closely with the National Government, Development Partners and Civil Societies to mobilize resources to support the affected Counties in order to scale-up these interventions.

## **2. Transport Sector**

County Governments remain vigilant on the operations of public transport.

We continue to tighten the measures imposed in the transport sector to curb the spread of the virus.

This has been done through ramping up hand washing and sanitation points in the bus and *matatus* terminals.

Additionally, County Governments have strengthened County Transport and Safety Committees.

The Committee is working with all relevant stakeholders to sensitize the citizenry on adherence of the transport protocols.

## **3. Gender**

COVID-19 continues to widen the existing inequalities for women and girls and discrimination of already marginalized groups including; people with disabilities and those living in extreme poverty.

In this regard, Counties have come up with interventions to cushion these vulnerable groups from the effects of the pandemic.

Some of these measures include;

- Setting aside special funds to cushion them from the adverse socio-economic effects of the pandemic;
- Provision of dignity packs for the women as well as;
- Sensitization of the public and the duty bearers on prevention and response to Gender Based Violence (GBV).

#### **4. Medical Waste Management**

We also note that there is still an influx of medical waste that is not disposed in a safe manner.

This continues to pose a great risk to the members of the public who interact with the waste material.

We therefore call upon all County Governments to ensure that segregation of waste is undertaken at source.

To enhance proper disposal of medical waste such as the personal protective equipment (PPEs), we urge counties to provide well labelled waste segregation bins and ensure compliance of Ministry of Health guidelines on medical waste disposal.

#### **5. Water Connectivity**

Water is a key component in the fight against COVID-19. In this regard, we urge County governments to ensure uninterrupted water service provision in isolation centers and all public spaces.

In areas with minimal water service levels, standby water tanks should be availed to guarantee constant water supply in order to observe the health guidelines on hand washing and hygiene.

## **Challenge**

### **Finance**

We note with concern the statement by the Controller of Budget to deny County Governments access to funds as a result of the pending audit issues.

It is important for the Office of the Controller to recognize that approval on requisition of funds is based on County Governments Appropriation Acts and the oversight role is purely the mandate of the County Assembly and Senate.

We therefore discourage the Controller on such attempts as it would be overstepping the mandate of the Office of the Controller of Budget and disrupt service delivery by County Governments.

### **Conclusion**

As I conclude, I wish to urge Kenyans to continue observing the public health protocols.

We can only flatten the curve and reduce the number of fatalities if we work together.

As County Governments, we shall continue to heighten surveillance and ensure enforcement of these measures.

Asanteni Sana!

**Signed**



**H.E Hon. Martin Wambora, EGH**  
**Chairman Council of Governors**