

# Government expects to vaccinate 65% of population

Health Minister, Dr Zwelini Mkhize, says government remains committed to vaccinate 65% of the population, or 40 million people, as per the original plan by the end of the year to help the country reach herd immunity.



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This, he said, is owing to vaccine doses being delivered by the manufacturing companies as per the agreed quarterly schedule when the vaccines were procured.

He said this when Ministers in the Social Services cluster appeared before the National Assembly to respond to oral questions on Wednesday.

“We are still targeting many of the vaccines to be administered by the end of the year.

“As we have indicated, we are mindful that some of the supplies can be delayed by the manufacturing companies.

“And therefore, we will be reviewing as we go to see whether that target needs to be altered or not. But in terms of our original plan, we would like to be able to vaccinate as many of those 40 million people by the end of the year,” he said.

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He said this as the country remains at lockdown alert level one, with 1,477 new Covid-19 infections being recorded since the last reporting period.

Mkhize said government has secured 43 million doses in total.

“Our agreements are currently with Johnson & Johnson as well as with Pfizer. The agreement with Johnson & Johnson is for 11 million doses, and 20 million from Pfizer. In addition, the commission to procure 12 million doses from Covax,” he said.

The Minister said the delivery schedule of the vaccine from Johnson & Johnson are committed into quarters, not in monthly volumes.

“In other words, at the moment, all we can tell is that by this quarter, this is likely to be how much we will get. Once we have got the matter refined, we will be in a position to know month by month or even week by week supplies of what they will give us. That helps us with the planning of the vaccination programme.”



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For the first quarter until 31 March, government anticipated 500,000 doses of Johnson & Johnson. Additionally, government anticipates receiving 600,000 doses from Pfizer.

“These doses will be allocated to healthcare workers. Out of those 600,000, about 110,000 of those have come from Covax.”

Mkhize said in quarter two up until June, government anticipates to receive eight million doses, of which five million will come from Pfizer and three million from Johnson & Johnson. These will be used to complete vaccination for healthcare workers as phase two.

“In quarter three, July to September, we anticipate receiving 11.6 million doses, and that is about 7.6 million from Pfizer and 4 million from Johnson & Johnson. These doses will be used to complete the vaccination for phase two and a balance for phase three.

“In quarter four, October to December, we anticipate 11 million doses, seven million from Pfizer, four from Johnson & Johnson.

“These doses will be used to complete phase three group. We have not received the final delivery schedule from Covax.

Mkhize also said that government is in the final stages of closing agreements for the balance of the doses required, “which should allow us to roll out the vaccine according to our plan”.

“When we have concluded all the agreements and we are in a position to do a month to month breakdown, we will be able to announce that and also, we will be procuring a bit more vaccines so that we cover more people as we have indicated.”

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