

Mkhize: E Cape Covid-19 outbreaks need aggressive approach

The cluster outbreaks of Covid-19 in the Eastern Cape must be managed more aggressively, Health Minister Zweli Mkhize said during his visit to the Livingstone Hospital in Port Elizabeth.



Health Minister Zweli Mkhize

The Eastern Cape has for the past few weeks been experiencing surges in positive Covid-19 cases in a number of districts and sub-districts contributing to a 50% spike in week-to-week numbers.

This prompted urgent action by Mkhize and the National Department of Health to meet with Eastern Cape provincial government officials to discuss an action plan to deal with the rising case numbers.

The shortage of nurses will also need to be addressed. "Staff exhaustion is an issue of major concern. It is not necessarily the work-load, but the emotional and mental well-being too. The worry of thinking you may infect your loved ones when returning home," Mkhize said.

With regard to the PPEs, Mkhize said his department took a decision that every facility, there should be an occupational health and safety committee consisting of staff, labour unions and management. "The reason for this is that we had enough stock in some areas, but the distribution was a problem. I am happy there is no issue this time," he said.

Mkhize will continue his visit in the Eastern Cape with inspections of the Nelson Mandela Bay testing site, the Dora Ngiza Hospital and the VW field hospital. He said there are a few steps he wants to propose and support in order to move forward. "If we don't do so, that is the beginning of the pandemic getting out of control. It is still very possible that we can suppress this wave and therefore delay the resurgence. We do need to go out into the community and try to reduce this as much as possible."