**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**HEALTH COMMITTEE UPDATED ON VACCINE ROLLOUT CAMPAIGN**

**Parliament, Wednesday, 25 August 2021** – The Portfolio Committee on Health received an update from the Department of Health on the vaccine rollout. The committee heard that in the past few days, South Africa is getting closer to its target of vaccinating 300 000 people per day.

Minister of Health Dr Joe Phaahla said: “The supply of vaccines is fairly stable. We do have adequate supply of the vaccines, in terms of capacity, the human resources. I can say with confidence that, at this stage, we do have adequate capacity in terms of the physical infrastructure to administer the vaccines.” This includes public and private facilities and the independent pharmacists who are assisting in administering vaccines.

The minister went on to say the department is aware of the challenge posed by fake news and anti-vaccine campaigners, and it is working on a communications strategy to address this.

The department’s  Deputy Director-General, Dr Nicholas Crisp, said the latest data shows about 267 000 people have been vaccinated over the past 24 hours. This comes after government opened up the vaccine rollout to all adult South Africans over the age of 18. Over 11 million vaccines have been administered and more than five million adults are now fully vaccinated in South Africa. More women are being vaccinated than men, Dr Crisp said.

Acting committee Chairperson Mr Tshilidzi Munyai said it is important for people to be vaccinated. “Vaccines are safe and highly effective in preventing severe illness and even death from Covid-19. The country needs to be ready before the fourth wave hits us,” he said.

The committee is encouraged with the progress achieved in rolling out vaccines. It appreciates that the targets set are subject to change. Members emphasised that vaccinating is the primary method of saving the population. The committee also welcomed the fact that all adults over 18 years of age are now able to be vaccinated, as this will enable government to reach its target of 40 million.

However, the committee expressed concern about the communication of the vaccine rollout and said communication has been less than ideal. In welcoming and commending the measures put in place to tackle communication challenges, the committee questioned where funding will come from to ensure that the proper messages are communicated to the people.

**ISSUED BY THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNICATION SERVICES ON BEHALF OF THE ACTING CHAIRPERSON OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, MR TSHILIDZI MUNYAI.**