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| **MEDIA STATEMENT**  **COMMITTEE ON HEALTH LEARNS THAT GOVERNMENT HAS MADE NO PRONOUNCEMENT ON MANDATORY VACCINATIONS** **Parliament, Friday, 10 September 2021** – The Portfolio Committee on Health heard that the government has not made any pronouncements on mandatory vaccines after Members of the committee asked what the government's official position is on mandatory vaccinations. The committee received an update from the Department of Health on the vaccine rollout programme and vaccine acquisitions. Briefing the committee, the department said vaccines do work. In responding to a question in this regard, the Deputy Minister of Health, Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo, said: “The presentation showed that with even one vaccine done, you are 80% protected. You may be still admitted to the hospital, but the chances of you are getting in ICU and not coming out are much slimmer.” Committee Chairperson Dr Kenneth Jacobs said he welcomed the fact that vaccinated people mean there is less congestion in hospitals. He noted that, from the figures presented, people who are not vaccinated have an 83% higher risk of becoming infected and landing up in hospital, versus the 17% chance of those who are vaccinated. There is 80% increased chance of landing up in ICU in non-vaccinated persons, compared with those who are vaccinated. This is very significant data and indicates the urgency of the vaccination programme. Dr Jacobs said South Africans need to understand the importance of vaccinations and getting themselves vaccinated.  The committee expressed its concern on vaccine hesitancy and asked how the department plans to address this challenge. Acting Director-General, Dr Nicholas Crisp, said: “As far as vaccine hesitancy is concerned, the are two types of hesitancy. The one is more about laziness, where people find that going for vaccinations is an effort. And [then there are] the people who are hesitant because they have engaged in messages that are negative and others who are just against vaccines.”**ISSUED BY THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNICATION SERVICES ON BEHALF OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, DR KENNETH JACOBS.** For media inquiries or interviews with the Chairperson, please contact the committee’s Media Officer:Name: Ms Yoliswa LanduParliamentary Communication ServicesCell: 081 497 4694E-mail: ylandu@parliament.gov.za    |

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