# NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

**FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION NO. 1129**

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**(INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 19)**

**Ms R N Komane (EFF) to ask the Minister of Health:**

What is the new strategy for curbing new community infections for coronavirus since the lockdown has not manifested tangible outcomes of reducing new infections in communities?

###### NW1431E

**REPLY:**

The strategy for curbing infections in communities is in keeping with the World Health Organisation’s recommendations, which is to undertake contact tracing, community screening and testing - which has now evolved into targetted community screening, especially in the hotspots (where there is greater than 5 cases per 100 000 population). The National Department of Health is also working closely with its provincial counterparts to also ensure hospital readiness for COVID-19. Moreover, community messaging on social distancing and hygiene practices are being stepped up in provinces, especially where the hotspots have been identified. A revised testing strategy will prioritise those persons who are at very high risk and are symptomatic.

The lockdown has been effective in managing new infections. The mathematical models have shown us that we would have had a five times higher mortality if the lockdown was not implemented.

Additionally the lockdown provides the health system an opportunity to plan for the surge of infections. The lockdown has achieved both these objectives reducing new infections and providing the healthcare system with more time to prepare for the surge.

The new strategy is a risk adjusted model of alert levels based on the level of infection and the health system capacity in an area. The health system must focus its energy and resources on these areas where there are high levels of infection. These areas are different from other areas where there is little or no infection. The areas with low risk do not require the stringent restriction that areas of high risk require. There is little value in a generalised lockdown when the reality is that there are specific areas of the country that are of high risk (Hotspot). These areas require intervention to curb the spread of infection. The risk adjusted approach is intended to focus our attention on areas that are at high risk. This is a much more efficient approach to responding to COVID-19.

END.