# NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

**FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION NO. 1386**

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**(INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 24)**

**Ms M D Hlengwa (IFP) to ask the Minister of Health:**

(a) In what areas throughout the Republic has there been a backlog in the testing for Covid-19, (b) what has his department identified to be the cause for the specified backlog and (c) what action plan is being implemented to alleviate the backlog?

###### NW1757E

**REPLY:**

1. The National Health Laboratory Service (NHLS) had backlogs in the testing for COVID-19 in the Western Cape, Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal and Eastern Cape Provinces. The Western Cape has cleared the backlog and is currently processing specimens as they receive them. Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng have managed to significantly reduce their backlogs. Free State, Limpopo, Mpumalanga, North West and Northern Cape have no backlogs.
2. The backlogs were caused by the global shortage of extraction kits and the polymerise chain reaction (PCR) test kits for the high throughput analysers.
3. The NHLS has increased the number of extraction instruments and diversified the testing platforms so that they have multiple suppliers of testing kits. They have implemented alternative methods of extraction e.g. heat deactivation method for extraction and more targeted and focused testing to allow better use of limited resources.

END.