# NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

**FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION NO. 2554**

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**(INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 29)**

**Ms A Gela (ANC) to ask the Minister of Health:**

What steps will be taken by his department to intensify the COVID-19 vaccination roll‑out to ensure that the nation reaches herd immunity by the end of the year, especially now in the post-elections period?

###### NW2981E

**REPLY:**

The goals of the vaccination programme are to save lives by vaccinating those at highest risk of severe disease and death, and to vaccinate as many people as possible so that society and the economy can open up and resume full capacity, thus protecting livelihoods.

Herd or population immunity refers to a situation where a high enough proportion of the population are immune (as a result of natural infection or immunisation) that the virus is unable to circulate; as a result even those who are not immune are protected from infection. Whilst it was initially thought that herd immunity for Covid-19 was achievable, scientists now consider this unlikely because of factors such as vaccine hesitancy, the emergence of new variants and the delayed approval of vaccinations for children.

The immediate target of the vaccine roll-out is to ensure that at least 70% of adults have received at least one dose of vaccine. As of 2nd December, 41% of adults had been vaccinated. Sufficient vaccines and capacity to vaccinate are now available, and the main constraint to achieving higher vaccination coverage relates to poor uptake of vaccines. In response, a comprehensive Demand Acceleration Strategy has been put in place in an effort to generate demand and increase the number of individuals accessing vaccination. Key components of this strategy include:

Raising the profile of the vaccine roll-out

1. Vooma Vaccination weekends were held during October and November 2021. These included a national call to action led by the President, as well as other political, trade union, religious, traditional and other leaders. Events were also hosted by national, provincial and local leadership at vaccination sites.
2. Working with a range of stakeholders at national, provincial and local levels in order to mobilise communities through a range of activities including mobilisation at events (e.g. religious gatherings), in public spaces (e.g. taxi ranks) and through door to door campaigns.
3. Recognition of good performance at provincial and district level, and of outstanding performance by healthcare and other workers during Vooma Vaccination weekends.

Making reliable information regarding the safety and effectiveness of vaccines widely available

1. Increasing the availability of reliable information regarding vaccination through various media platforms including TV, radio and print media.
2. Improved signage at vaccination sites, and improving locally available information regarding location and opening times of local vaccination sites.
3. Monitoring and addressing misinformation circulating on social media.
4. Developing a network of local vaccination champions who volunteer to motivate those around them to vaccinate and report any problems with vaccination sites.

Providing incentives and rewards to vaccinated individuals

1. Limiting access to sports and other events to those who are vaccinated.
2. A pilot project whereby individuals 50 years and older can access a R100 (recently increased to R200) grocery voucher to offset any costs incurred through vaccination (e.g. transport costs).
3. Encouraging retail stores and other companies to provide rewards (e.g. entry to a lucky draw) for those who are vaccinated.
4. Consideration of making vaccines mandatory in some settings providing that these are implemented within the current legislative and regulatory framework.

Removing barriers to vaccination

1. Increasing the number of outreach and pop-up sites in an effort to take vaccinations as close as possible to people and communities.
2. Ensuring that as many sites as possible are open during weekends (especially but not exclusively during Vooma Vaccination weekends).
3. Pilot projects including provision of free transport to vaccination sites.

END.