# NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

**FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION NO. 2737**

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

With the looming fourth wave of the COVID-19 pandemic and the steady increase of infections, what total (a) number of (i) hospital beds and (ii) oxygen tanks have been made available in each province in anticipation of the potential increase in hospitalisations and (b) consultation has his department had with provincial departments of health following the news of the detection of the new Omicron variant in the Republic?

**NW3252E**

# REPLY:

1. Total number of –
   1. Number of Hospital beds

The country has a total of 108 805 general beds and 5616 critical care beds all available for admission of Covid-19 patients.

* 1. Oxygen tanks that have been made available in each province

The oxygen tanks are allocated per hospital and not per province. The size of the tank is based on the size of the hospital and its capability to manage patients that require oxygenation. The oxygen tanks per hospital are attached as annexure A. Over and above these tanks, Afrox has further repurposed the oxygen cylinders and increased the capacity from 9000 cylinders that were available before Covid-19 to 19 000that are available for use during the pandemic.

1. The department held the two day workshop with the provinces, in anticipation of the fourth wave as part of the broad consultative process. This planning was irrespective of the variant, but more focused on the getting all resources ready for the pandemic knowing all variants are different but that they require proper planning. From this workshop, the provinces developed resurgence plans which are currently being implemented. Over and above these plans, the department, through the National Institute, as a partner, communicates with the provinces through the submission of the Situational Report on the variants. The departmental Incident Management Team has also allocated senior managers as provincial leads, who work directly with the provinces and they report to the National IMT every week on Thursday.

END.