# NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

**FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION NO. 2888**

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**(INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 50)**

**Mr D F Mthenjane (EFF) to ask the Minister of Health:**

What (a) measures has he put in place to ensure that hospitals in the Eastern Cape are fully equipped for the continuing rise in the number of COVID-19 infections and (b) lessons has he learnt (i) from the first wave of the spread of the virus and (ii) regarding the importance of personal protective equipment for frontline workers?

###### NW3713E

**REPLY:**

1. All District Offices and hospitals in the Eastern Cape have been provided with the Action Plan to prepare the hospitals for an envisaged resurgence. This includes practical measures that hospitals must implement to enhance the readiness for the rising numbers of COVID-19 in the Province. The essential respiratory support devices and donated oxygen equipment have been distributed to central, regional and district facilities with an emphasis to have adequately trained staff and infrastructure at all these facilities. The Department initiated an audit of oxygen reticulation infrastructure which was completed at 64 priority hospitals in the Province. This audit was aimed at the improvement of oxygen delivery capabilities at these facilities. The Provincial Department is implementing suggested rectification actions within the current national financial constraints, to improve the availability of bulk liquid oxygen. At five hospitals the current cylinder oxygen banks are to be replaced with bulk oxygen tanks to provide additional constant supply to the hospitals. Cement Plinths to accommodate these tanks are constructed at the hospitals and tanks are moved to the new positions and coupled to the reticulation. Oxygen cylinder resupply is closely monitored and has been scaled to meet the additional demand. Hospital facilities in Nelson Mandela Bay are supported by a large Field Hospital facility to provide additional beds. The facilities are increasing the available isolation and treatment beds to accommodate the additional demand. Wards with an additional ninety (90) oxygenated beds have also been completed at the Dora Nginza Hospital and a basement area at the Livingstone Hospital has been converted to provide 74 additional oxygenated beds. Both facilities are in the process of commissioning, with the recruitment of staff in process.
2. Various lessons were learnt in the response to the first wave, with adjustment of the implementation interventions:
3. The lessons learnt in the first wave were captured in an Intra Action Review of the response under the guidance of the World Health Organisation (WHO). Where necessary rectifying actions have been implemented. The lessons learnt are being reviewed on an ongoing basis in a daily Incident Management Team (IMT) meeting of the Province.
4. The importance of the use of the personal protective equipment (PPE) is because it contributes towards the protection of the health care workers from infection. With the correct use of the PPE, the staff is able to avoid infection and as such is always on duty to provide the services to the people. In this regard the Department conducts ongoing training on the correct use of the required PPE for frontline workers. Stock levels of PPE are monitored continuously by the provincial pharmacy supply chain management, as reported regularly to the IMT. This ensures that PPE are always available to the frontline workers. At high volume facilities, marshals have been stationed to monitor the continuous sanitation of hands and use of masks and PPE.

END.