# NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

**FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION NO. 3570**

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**(INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 38)**

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

(1) Considering that opioid use, particularly a variant known locally as whoonga and/or nyaope, has grown exponentially in the Republic over the past 20 years and that the price of heroine has come down and is now marketed specifically in townships to lower income groups, and against the background of the National Drug Master Plan (details furnished) and international best practice for interventions (details furnished), what is his department’s strategy for dealing with the increase in opioid addiction;

(2) how (a) will the specified strategy be adapted to specifically reach those in low‑income areas and (b) does the strategy support the inclusion of both (i) professional and (ii) non-professional approaches to the recovery of opioid addiction;

(3) what programmes are in place to educate the public on the (a) preventative and (b) after-care role of the community in substance-abuse recovery? **NW4376E**

**REPLY:**

1. The National Department of Health adopted the Health Sector Drug Master Plan 2019-2025. Among interventions contained in the Health Sector Drug Master Plan are:

* To develop and implement Medication Assisted treatment, including Opioid Substitution Therapy
* To collaborate with other key departments in informing the public especially young people on dangers of substance abuse including Opioid use
* Fully participate in substance abuse initiatives as a member of the Central Drug Authority emanating from the Prevention of and treatment for Substance abuse Act 2008,(Act No. 70. of 2008) led by the Department of Social development

1. (a) - The department is in the process of developing an implementation plan that

will encompass access to Opioid Substitution Therapy at Primary Health Care level

- Education messages are distributed using multimedia platforms to ensure that they reach as many people as possible, including those in low income areas.

(b) (i) Yes

(ii) The Department is not clear what is meant by non- professional approaches. The Strategy promotes use of evidence-based interventions for the recovery from Opioid addiction.

1. (a) The National department of Health collaborates on the Ke Moja campaign (A campaign that attempts to curb substance abuse by school children. English translation is “I’m fine without drugs”) as well as the drug awareness week activities as a member of the Central Drug Authority led by the Department of Social Development as a lead Department on substance abuse.

(b) After care role of the community in substance-abuse recovery is the mandate of the Department of Social Development in line with the Prevention of and treatment for substance abuse Act, 2008, (Act no 70 of 2008).

END.