# NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

**FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION NO. 572**

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**(INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 11)**

**Ms N N Chirwa (EFF) to ask the Minister of Health:**

Given that the Republic is supposed to be testing 12 times the number of persons for COVID-19 than what is currently the case, (a) what steps is he taking to increase the number of tests done, (b) by what date will the target be reached, (c)(i) what is the range of the tests being utilised currently and (ii) how will the variety be increased to match the target minimum of 3 000 tests daily and (d) will the SARS-CoV-2 or COVID-19 rapid tests which detect infection in just 20 minutes be secured?

###### NW762E

**REPLY:**

1. There is no policy to increase testing by 12 times. However the National Health Laboratory Service (NHLS) has been steadily increasing the number of COVID-19 tests that they are conducting. Cumulatively as at 02 June 785,979 tests have been done with 51% done in the public sector with the remainder in the private sector.
2. On average over the past 14 days, an average of 19,024 tests are being done daily, and in the previous two weeks the average number of tests done per day were 15,471.
3. (i) Currently both public and private laboratories are using the polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test. The South African Health Products Regulatory Authority (SAHPRA) is in the process of evaluating the rapid antibody tests;

(ii) As more test kits as well as the rapid antibody tests become available and more people are referred for testing the rate at which we test will increase – it should be noted that we have already surpassed the 3,000 tests done daily as shown above.

1. SAHPRA is in the process of evaluating the rapid tests for quality and once they are registered they will be used - largely for surveillance to assess how many people have antibodies which means that they have had the virus.

END.