# NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

**WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION NO. 594 (Question 120 for oral reply)**

**DATE OF PUBLICATION IN INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 04 MARCH 2021**

**(INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 06)**

**Dr S S Thembekwayo (EFF) to ask the Minister of Health:**

What (a) lessons has his department learnt from COVID-19 about the state of public health provision in the Eastern Cape and (b) measures does his department intend to put in place to revamp the state of public health in that province?

###### NO700E

**REPLY:**

1. Covid-19 showed that there are challenges within the province that are because of fiscal constraints and the impact of medico-legal litigations which impact quality of care provisioning. This was also because of critical staff shortage because of the fiscal constraints impact. Further exacerbating staff morale. The pull of these already tight resources to mitigate Covid-19 resulted in service backlogs in other priority programmes such as HIV and Aids, TB, and Immunisation.
2. The department has developed a five-pillar strategic approach to mitigate and improve the quality of care within the province. These are –
3. Financial sustainability.
4. Medico-legal mitigation strategy
5. Service Optimisation.
6. Digitalisation and eHealth implementation.
7. Healthy Communities initiatives with focus on:
* Maternal and child health.
* Communicable and non-communicable diseases.
* Mental health.
* Clinical governance.
* NHI implementation strategies.

On Covid-19 mitigation, the department had an intra-action review sessions in-between the covid-19 waves and shared the lessons were learnt that led to improvement of the response. These included:

1. Empowering the Community Health Workers to use oxymeters for monitoring home isolated patients and educating communities to seek early intervention and hospital admissions.
2. Increased bed capacity to ensure all patients could be accommodated. This was further supported with increased oxygen point availability.
3. Improved clinical protocols and monitored management of patient care by clinical managers including ensuring all patients were seen daily including weekends.

END.