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| **PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**  **NATIONAL ASSEMBLEY** |

**QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION 660**

**DATE OF QUESTION: 24 APRIL 2020**

**DATE OF SUBMISSION: 12 MAY 2020**

**Adv G Breytenbach (DA) to ask the Minister of Justice and Correctional Services:**

(1) What policies and guidelines has his department put in place to prevent detainees under its care from being infected with the coronavirus by (a) staff members at its facilities and (b) remand detainees who may travel to and from court;

(2) what are the relevant details of his department’s contingency plan in the event that a large percentage of warders become infected simultaneously? **NW862E**

**REPLY**

(1)(a) The department has approved Standard Operating Procedures for the Preparedness, Detection and Response to Coronavirus Disease 2019   
(COVID-19) which stipulates a number of psychological/psychosocial protocol measures and guidelines or activities to be implemented in order to prevent transmission of COVID-19 from staff to detainees at facilities and these include:

* Presentation of awareness sessions to the staff on:
  + explanation on what COVID-19 is and the mode of spread;
  + the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 to be aware of;
  + measures to be taken to prevent spreading COVID-19 to others or acquiring it;
  + compliance with basic Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) measures; and
  + responsibilities of reporting to health care professionals or their health care providers when experiencing signs and symptoms.
* Implementation of Infection Prevention and Control measures especially the health care professionals when providing health care services;
* Screening of all officials on a daily basis when reporting for duty to ensure that those that are symptomatic are immediately referred to their health care providers for further management;
* Ensuring that all staff wash their hands with soap and water and sanitize them at regular intervals;
* Ensuring social/physical distancing even though wearing masks;
* Issuing all staff with cloth masks when performing their duties (e.g. for guarding and escorting), and coughing and sneezing staff with surgical masks; and
* Issuing of domestic gloves which must be decontaminated in between searches.

(1)(b) Remand detainees who may travel to and from court are protected as follows:

* guarding and escorting staff are provided with PPEs (cloth masks, disposable gowns or aprons and heavy duty or domestic gloves;
* there must be maintenance of social/physical distancing of 2 meters where practically possible, e.g. not overloading the vehicles; and
* all utensils, equipment, and vehicle used during transportation of such cases must be cleaned and disinfected after use.

(2) The Department has a contingency plan in place whereby non-centre based officials appointed in terms of the Correctional Service Act and the Public Service Act that have undergone basic training, will be transferred to the centres where services are needed as a result of staff shortages as a result of COVID-19. The Department has also entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the South African National Defence Force whereby reserves will be used to augment the services rendered by correctional officials. In addition, the ex- Correctional Services officials will be appointed to augment the imminent shortage.

**END**