# NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

**FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION NO. 710**

**DATE OF PUBLICATION IN INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 01 MAY 2020**

**(INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 13)**

**Mrs C C S Motsepe (EFF) to ask the Minister of Health:**

What measures does he intend to take to regulate retail stores which have emerged as a dangerous point of infection for COVID-19 to stop the surge in infections at such centres?

###### NW914E

**REPLY:**

Information from a number of provinces including the Eastern Cape, Gauteng, Kwazulu-Natal and Western Cape shows that during the lockdown retail stores became a node for the transmission of COVID-19. This should not surprise us as grocery shops were one of the essential parts of the economy that had to be kept open with high volumes of people congregating in them. Thus facilitating the spread of the virus. This also meant that infected shoppers – many of whom may have been asymptomatic (that is they didn’t know that they were infected) also infected employees in the retail sector. These employees then go back to their communities and the virus spreads in their local communities.

Provinces have implemented a number of steps to mitigate the risk of transmission in retail stores. In the Western Cape the Department of Economic Affairs and Tourism had several engagements with the owners and management of small and large retail outlets and mall management. They were provided with guidelines on the prevention of COVID-19 transmission, including deep cleaning, dealing with personal hygiene, dealing with staff that become symptomatic, making public announcements, etc. In Gauteng, the MECs for health and economic affairs met with the leadership of the retail sector in the province to discuss the implementation of measures to prevent transmission of the virus, including hand washing/ sanitizing and social distancing as well as the use of masks. The major retail stores are currently implementing these measures nation-wide. In the Eastern Cape, health officials have visited retail stores in urban areas to monitor compliance.

Workplace health and safety issues were also discussed at NEDLAC. These included the need to conduct risk assessments in all workplaces, implementation of public health measures to prevent the spread of the virus as well as personal hygiene measures. It was also agreed that sector specific guidelines will be produced and implemented

END.