# NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

**FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION NO. 993**

**DATE OF PUBLICATION IN INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 29 MAY 2020**

**(INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 18)**

**Mr P A van Staden (FF Plus) to ask the Minister of Health:**

(1) Whether, with reference to his media release on 17 May 2020, in which he reported that a total number of 21 314 tests for Covid-19 were done on citizens throughout the Republic during the 24 hour period since 16 May 2020, he can indicate (a) what total number of test results are outstanding and still need to be finalised by public and private laboratories on a daily basis for Covid-19, (b) from what dates these test results are behind in each province and (c) what are the reasons for the (i) specified delays and (ii) Republic not being able to reach the stated goal of 30 000 tests per day; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details in each case;

(2) whether he will make a statement on the matter?

###### NW1282E

**REPLY:**

(1) (a) The total number of outstanding tests fluctuates on a daily basis, mainly due to the increased community screening that was undertaken in the provinces with corresponding increase in demand for testing for persons under investigation. The number of outstanding COVID-19 tests as at 16 June 2020 in the public sector is currently 54 901, obtaining data from the private sector is proving difficult. The weekly outstanding tests are tabulated below, with backlogs being cleared:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 09/05/20 | 14/05/20 | 21/05/20 | 25/05/20 | 28/05/20 | 04/06/20 | 09/06/20 | 10/06/20 | 11/06/20 | 16/06/20 |
| Total | 49 550 | 58 930 | 101 000 | 96 480 | 83 767 | 81 069 | 70 219 | 63 244 | 57 034 | 54 901 |

(b) Currently the outstanding tests are about 107 hours old, this is approximately 4 and a half days.

(c) (i) The outstanding tests started in the first week of May 2020 when demand exceeded supply, this was due to:

* A global shortage of extraction and high throughput kits for undertaking the tests;
* Logistical issues – interruptions with production, flights cancellations, customs delays;
* The number of tests allocated to the country is not determined by what the country ordered or needs but by what the supplier can provide.

(ii) The Republic has the capacity to undertake 30 000 tests per day, the key challenge being faced is the supply of chemicals and reagents to undertake the testing. Testing will be prioritised in the hotspot areas especially among the vulnerable persons (greater than 60 years of age and those with underlying medical conditions).

END.