# NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

**FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION NO. 998**

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

**Ms M D Hlengwa (IFP) to ask the Minister of Health:**

(1) In view of reports that clinics and other essential healthcare providers for other illnesses are being shunned due to fear of contracting Covid-19, as well as the general fear of harassment from the SA Police Service and/or SA National Defence Force, what steps has his department taken to ensure that persons are still able to receive other essential medical care during the Covid-19 pandemic;

(2) what total number of deaths were caused by (a) tuberculosis and (b) HIV and/or Aids-related illnesses since the lockdown to curb the spread of Covid-19 began;

(3) whether the specified number of deaths caused by such illnesses has increased as the lockdown to curb the spread of Covid-19 continues; if not, why not; if so, what has his department identified as the reason for the increase?

###### NW1287E

**REPLY:**

1. The Department of Health has been implementing the Central Chronic Medicines Dispensing and Distribution (CCMDD) programme. The CCMDD programme is a National Department of Health (NDoH) initiative to improve access to chronic medicines to stable patients by enabling them to collect their repeat medicines from a convenient collection point near their home or place of employment thereby decreasing the patient volumes in health care facilities.
   1. Eligible patients collect their diabetes, hypertension, ARVs and other chronic medication for free from a convenient pick-up point like Dis-Chem, Clicks, Pick n Pay or even a local spaza shop. Majority of these service providers have been open during the National lockdown, allowing clients to collect their treatment without interruption.
   2. The majority of these service providers have been open during the National lockdown, allowing clients to collect their treatment without interruption. However, lockdown restrictions created a confusion around availability of public transport services to access these service outlets.
   3. In health facilities, before and during the lockdown patients were given 2-3 month Tenofovir + Lamivudine + Dolutegravir (TLD) supply and 2 months Tenofovir +Emtricitibine + Efavirenz (TEE) supply;
2. The Department of Health has also strengthened in-facility processes and support to People Living with HIV (PLHIV) on ART in order to maintain adherence. Tracking and tracing (telephonically and then in-person) of clients lost to follow-up is ongoing in majority of our facilities during lockdown;
   1. The Department of Health has developed messaging for PLHIV and people living with TB regarding the importance of treatment. These various messages have been sent to clients through SMS and social media;
   2. The Department of Health in partnership with the SABC and other partners, have initiated COVID-19 radio programme. This communication is cutting across all health programmes in relation to the pandemic through daily pre-recorded interviews in all SABC radio stations, to address what needs to happen during the lockdown period regarding treatment adherence and access to services.

(2) The registered deaths from the civil registration system are maintained by the Department of Home Affairs (DHA) and the Department of Health is not in a position to provide the requested information.

(3) The Department of Health is not able to provide the requested analysis because of access restrictions to the civil registration system data, which is hosted by the Department of Home Affairs.

END.