



Classification

correctional services

Department:
Correctional Services
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

UPDATE ON THE STATUS OF COVID-19 IN SOUTH AFRICA

**Strategic Planning Session
07 – 09 December 2021
Bloemfontein**

CDC Incarceration and Corrections

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PURPOSE

The purpose of this presentation is to:

- Provide an update on the status of COVID-19 in South Africa and indicate the actions required.



SUMMARY

- Viruses constantly change through mutation and new variants occur over time thus SARS-CoV-2 is no exception.
- The genetic variations occur over time and can lead to emergence of new variants that may have different characteristics e.g. severity, the speed in spreading, but so far the management is exactly the same.
- There is still a lot that is not known about the COVID-19 variants and genomic surveillance is continuing.

SUMMARY

- Delta continues to dominate in all provinces until end October 2021.
- New B.1.1.529 lineage first detected from specimens collected in Gauteng on 22 November 2021. Sequencing is ongoing to determine prevalence of B.1.1.529 in other provinces.
 - Identified in Botswana first and now Belgium and Israel.
 - No unusual symptoms have been reported following infection with the B.1.1.529 variant and as with other variants some individuals are asymptomatic.

SUMMARY

What are the implications? Will these mutations affect vaccine effectiveness, disease severity, and transmissibility?

- B.1.1.529 has the potential to increase transmissibility, however work is still under way to investigate the response to vaccines and monitor the hospitalization as well as the outcomes associated with this variant.
- It is worth noting that partial immune escape is likely, but is likely that vaccines will still offer high levels of protection against hospitalization and death.

SUMMARY

- It is expected that new variants will continue to emerge whenever viruses are spreading.
- Vaccination remains critical to protect against hospitalization and death, reduce strain of the health system and slow the transmission of the virus



PROBLEM STATEMENT

The emergence of a new variant namely **B.1.1.529 (Omicron /Nu)**

- The variant have not yet fulfilled the criteria for VOC or VOI



ACTIONS REQUIRED

- The **DCS SOP** is still relevant and implementation thereof should continue as it covers the preparedness, preventative strategies, detection and response to COVID-19.
- Implementation and compliance to the approved **Risk Adjusted Strategy** during National Lockdown: COVID-19.
- The implementation of **public health and social measures** (previously called non-pharmaceutical interventions) = such as:
 - Social/Physical distancing (1 meter or more), wearing of masks and hand hygiene, avoid unnecessary gatherings or opt to gather in well ventilated spaces.
 - These remain the cornerstone of COVID-19 infection prevention.

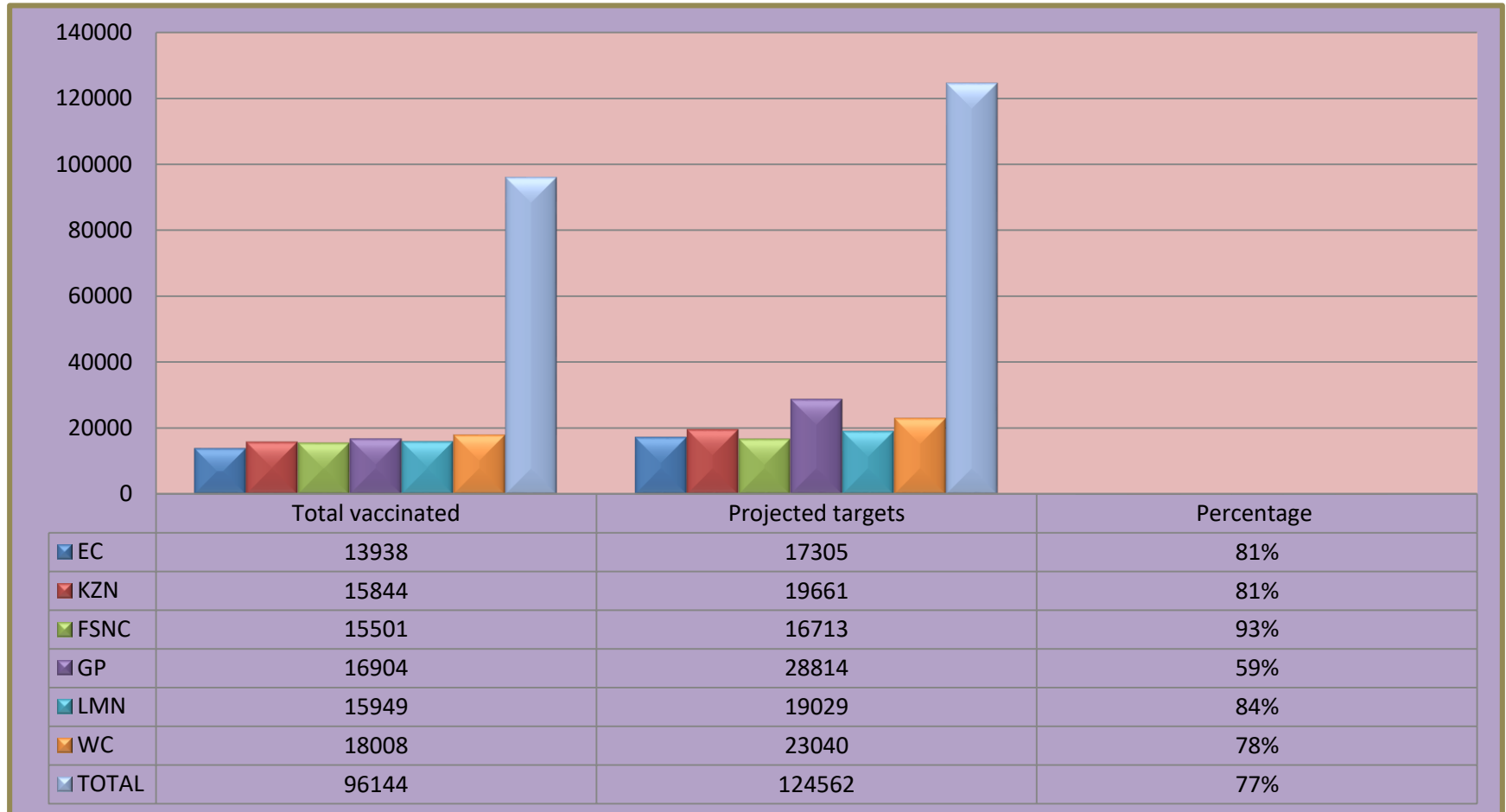


ACTIONS REQUIRED CONT'D

- Even with continued behavioral fatigue, rapid vaccination of the population provides a powerful tool to reduce severe illness and death.
- Mass vaccination where high numbers are vaccinated ensures quicker achievement of herd immunity compared to slow uptake (VOOMA Campaigns).
- ***Therefore vaccination of inmates and officials must continue, especially in Management Areas where the numbers are currently low to ensure maximum protection against severe disease as a result of COVID-19.***
 - Inmate vaccination target 90%
 - Officials COVID-19 vaccination target 70%
- Implementation of the above mentioned measures will certainly limit the impact of the fourth wave.



STATUS OF INMATE VACCINATIONS (25 NOVEMBER 2021)



CONCLUSION

It is important to highlight that different variants will continue to emerge, but the preventative measures remains the same until further notice.



THANK YOU



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