



NEWS FROM THE PRESIDENT: Covid-19 vaccine

Best wishes to all members for 2021, which has started with this worrying 2nd wave of COVID-19.

You will all be aware that the Minister of Health announced a phased roll-out of the COVID-19 vaccine last week. Please take note of the following:

Phase 1: Frontline health workers

Yesterday it was announced that 1,500,000 doses of a 2-dose COVID-19 vaccine has been secured (will cover only 750,000,00 health workers) and will be dispensed in the first quarter starting in February 2021, or sooner depending on availability. According to the Minister's presentation the target population of this group is 1,250,000.

According to the report we have received the vaccine will be available to frontline health workers in four groups/categories according to risk.

Group 1: health workers conducting aerosol generating procedures such as intubations and ventilations etc

Group 2: health workers in direct contact with known or suspected Covid-19 patients

Group 3: those in contact with patients

Group 4: those not in contact with patients

We understand that students that render services in any of the above groups (1-3) will be covered but we will investigate this further with the universities.

The vaccinations will be administered in 3 programmes:

- Work-based programme: District level, private and public hospitals
- Outreach work-based programmes: Mobile teams
- Vaccination Centres: remote or facility based.
- We have been informed that health care workers with medical aids could receive their vaccination at Dischem or Clicks but it is unclear what sort of documentation will be required to support that the individual fits the Phase 1 and group criteria. We are waiting for this information and will inform OTASA members accordingly.
 - We have also been advised to collect information about members that do not have a medical aid. If you fall into this group, please advise the OTASA Office in an E-mail: otoffice@uitweb.co.za Subject: COVID-19 vaccine.

Phase 2 Essential workers

This includes:

- Police officers, miners and workers in the security, retail food, funeral, teachers, banking and essential municipal and home affairs, border control and port health services (population 2,500,000).
- Persons in congregate settings (1,100,000) such as care homes, detention centres, shelters and prisons. In addition, people working in the hospitality and tourism industry, and educational institutions who are also at risk. (1,100,000)
- People over 60 (5,000,000)
- People above 18 with co-morbidities: such as uncontrolled diabetes, chronic lung disease, poorly controlled cardiovascular disease, renal disease, HIV, TB and obesity.