



**health**

Department:  
Health  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



## **Ministerial Advisory Committee on COVID-19 Terms of Reference**

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## Abbreviations

Coronavirus Disease-2019	-	COVID-19
MAC	-	Ministerial Advisory Committee
NDoH	-	National Department of Health

## Introduction

Outbreaks of emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases confer a direct threat to human health, the integrity of our health system, and the national and global economy. Like the influenza pandemics of 1918 and 2009, and epidemics of Ebola Virus Disease (2014), SARS (2002), and MERS (2012), the novel coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 now causing an epidemic of Coronavirus Disease-2019 (COVID-19) focuses our attention on the inter-sectoral, multidisciplinary response that is needed to respond within South Africa, and the critical benefit to a country that is well prepared for the next epidemic or pandemic.

South Africa has coped well with past challenges in this arena, but the rapidity and range of the response has been sub-optimal due to it being reactionary rather than proactive. The proactive, operational work that would ensure South Africa is better prepared, should be done in the inter-pandemic period, preparing the vast range of public health, clinical, research, and movement of populations interventions to 'set-piece' scenarios i.e., outbreaks, epidemics or pandemics of high consequent pathogens that are spread via respiratory, bloodborne, foodborne or other means. These same issues are critical to focus on with specific reference to COVID-19 pandemic response.

## Purpose and Scope

The Ministerial Advisory Committee (MAC) on COVID-19 is a non-statutory, advisory Committee appointed by the Minister of Health to provide high level strategic advice to the Minister of Health on the management of the COVID-19 outbreak in South Africa. The MAC on COVID-19 will provide advice but is not responsible for the delivery or coordination of services related to the COVID-19 response.

The MAC on COVID-19 will consist of four Committees:

1. Pathologists and Laboratory;
2. Clinicians;
3. Public Health; and
4. Research.

Non-members may be invited to attend meetings and provide presentations by the Chairperson of the Committee as required. Any invited guests must be approved by the Chairperson of the Committee prior to the meeting and must sign an applicable declaration of confidentiality.

Each of these Committees will review material and evidence available locally and internationally, as well as that which is provided by technical working groups supporting the National Department of Health (NDoH) on its COVID-19 response. It will provide the Minister of Health recommendations on:

- a) Case management of individuals infected with SARS-CoV-2 at all levels of the health care system. This includes:
  - a. Clinical management guidelines;
  - b. Selection of drugs on the Essential Medicines List;
  - c. Effective infection prevention and control interventions (health facilities and community level);
  - d. Flow of patients into the health system, such as from port authorities and the hospitality industry; and
  - e. Emergency services and disaster management response.
- b) Public health interventions in the control and mitigation phases of an outbreak, such as social distancing measures, strategy for testing of case detection in communities and related isolation of cases and tracing and quarantine of their contacts, school, higher education and business closures, as well as national locked-down.
- c) Communications strategies to optimize national community advocacy, awareness and education campaigns during an epidemic.
- d) Research priorities into pathogenesis, clinical management (including presentation, diagnosis, and treatment modalities), disease modelling, and public health interventions. Particular emphasis on the interaction with our vulnerable HIV and NCD populations.
- e) Economic impact to the health system and broader sectors within government, including issues of sector-wide procurement.

## Authority to act

The MAC on COVID-19 is an advisory Committee to the Minister of Health and does not have any delegated powers to act on behalf of, or to commit, the Minister or Government to any actions.

The Minister of Health or his designated person will chair the MAC on COVID-19. The Minister will dissolve the Committee at his discretion.

## Conditions of membership

Members of the MAC are participants in their individual capacity and do not represent any constituency, organization or sector. Members participate in their individual capacity. Members have a duty to act honestly and in good faith and to exercise skill, care and diligence in carrying out their duties and not make improper use of information. Members are subject to all of the applicable provisions and procedures surrounding Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality.

Members **may not** nominate representatives to attend meetings in their absence. Members may not allow non-members to listen in or attend the meetings unless approved by the Chair.

## Code of conduct

Members are expected to:

- avail themselves for virtual meetings, punctually and for the whole of the scheduled meeting time;
- indicate their failure to attend any meeting in writing to the secretariat, in good time with the reason as to why they were unable to attend;
- act with the highest professional and ethical standard at all times;
- contribute to debate in an informed and rational way and take decisions solely in the interest of the public;
- regard the views expressed by individual members of the MAC on COVID-19 and recommendations as strictly confidential;
- respect and value each member's perspective and contribution;
- make decisions together and take joint responsibility for them; and
- be informed and prepared for the meeting by reading the agenda and papers.

Under no circumstances may an individual member, other than the MAC Chairperson, officially represent the views and decisions of MAC on COVID-19 with stakeholder groups.

## Remuneration of Ministerial Advisory Committee members

Appointed and co-opted members of the Ministerial Advisory Committee Groups will not be remunerated for personal time spent participating in meetings and working on technical documents.