

MEDIA STATEMENT

To: Editors & Health Journalists

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Department warns public of Diarrhoeal disease outbreak and rising Cholera cases

Pretoria: The Department of Health would like to urge the public to take extra precautionary measures and maintain proper hand-hygiene as the country experience an outbreak of Diarrhoeal disease or gastrointestinal infection, and the rising number of laboratory-confirmed cases of Cholera.

The department has been informed of cases of people presenting with gastrointestinal symptoms in Hammanskraal, north of Pretoria in the past few days, and this has led to over 50 people receiving medical care at Jubilee Hospital. Unfortunately, six patients have lost their lives.

Diarrhoeal disease is a common and often highly infectious condition that affects the stomach and intestines.

It is a leading cause of child mortality and morbidity in the world, and mostly spreads by contact with an infected person or through contaminated food and drinking water sources.

Individuals generally become ill 12 – 48 hours after exposure. Some of the common symptoms include diarrhoea, cramps, nausea, vomiting and low-grade fever.

Meanwhile, the department can also confirm that the cumulative number of positive cholera cases has increased to 22, following the detection of four more cases in Gauteng, and seven cases in Vredefort and Parys areas under Free State Province.

Members of the public are urged to avoid known or suspected contaminated food, water and surfaces, and wash hands thoroughly with soap before handling food or after using the bathroom to prevent possible infection.

Never drink water from unsafe sources such as rivers, dams, streams, unless boiled or disinfected first.

The provincial and district outbreak response teams in both provinces have been dispatched to the affected communities to further investigate the source of the outbreaks, and intensify health education and promotion to empower the community members with health information.

The department will keep the country informed of the developments and findings of the investigations

For all technical enquiries, please contact the National Institute for Communicable Diseases at Media@nicd.ac.za or Sinenhlahla Jimoh on 0826099514

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