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REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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NOTICE: DOSING INTERVAL OF THE PFIZER-BIONTECH COVID-19 VACCINE

Vaccination has been identified as a key intervention to mitigate the public health and economic impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and end the acute phase of the global pandemic. Access to an effective vaccine and its appropriate use protects individuals and communities against serious disease and prevents the spread of those diseases to other people.

The Ministerial Advisory Committee on COVID-19 Vaccines (VMAC) has considered the currently available vaccines based on available data on their safety, efficacy and immunogenicity, ease of use, logistic implications, supply and sustainability, cost, as well as registration with the South African Health Products Authority, for use in the citizens of South Africa. The effect of the circulating variants has also been taken into account. Based on these considerations, and upon the advice of the VMAC, the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine has been procured as one of the vaccines to be used in the South African Covid-19 Vaccination Programme.

The COVID-19 vaccine developed by Pfizer/BioNTech is indicated for active immunisation to prevent COVID-19 caused by SARS-CoV-2 virus. This vaccine consists of a 2-dose regimen, of which a 21-day dosing interval between the first and second dose has been shown to be efficacious in Phase 3 clinical trials. There is currently emerging evidence to support a 42-day interval between the first and second doses. The VMAC has reviewed the available evidence in this regard and have advised that, in the event of limited vaccine supply, the dosing interval should be extended to 42 days.

Recommendation

It is recommended that, based on the above considerations, the Pfizer/BioNTech Covid-19 vaccine should be administered using the 42-day dosing interval between the first and second doses.

Note: This recommendation may be amended should further data become available.

The scheduling on the Electronic Vaccination Data System (EVDS) will be programmed accordingly.

Provinces and Healthcare facilities are requested to distribute and communicate this information in consultation with their Vaccine programme managers (or Coordinators).

Kind regards

**DR SSS BUTHELEZI
DIRECTOR-GENERAL: HEALTH
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