

# Covid-19 infrastructure to be used for NHI – IOL 17 August 2020

Durban - WITH the number of Covid-19 infections in KwaZulu-Natal declining and government health facilities not being full, the provincial Department of Health said that they planned to use the created infrastructure for the National Health Insurance system.

This was according to Health MEC Nomagugu Simelane-Zulu at a media briefing on Sunday.

It was noted that not all the facilities made available for the surge in Covid-19 cases were being used.

Simelane-Zulu welcomed the vote of approval by Health Minister Zweli Mkhize for the department's work after he inspected hospitals in the eThekweni and uMgungundlovu districts, among others, earlier this month.

Simelane-Zulu said they had not used all of their infrastructure as there had not been a need for it.

"If precautions were not taken then people could be caught in a second wave which was going to be more dangerous than the first wave."

Premier Sihle Zikalala, who chaired the briefing, said: "We are cognisant of the threat of a new wave of Covid-19 infections coming back to overwhelm us. We have seen it in other countries, where people thought the virus had subsided and then they started behaving recklessly, making the virus come back stronger than before. If we allow that to happen, government will not hesitate to re-institute the ban on alcohol, and bring back other restrictions.

"In the last seven days, KZN has bucked the trend and actually had a decline in new cases reported since the beginning of August."

He cautioned that while the province's numbers were declining, it was still going through its peak.

The province had 1 673 deaths. The eThekweni metro area had the most fatalities in KZN - 857; uMgungundlovu district was second with 232 and uThukela district third with 87 deaths.

uMlazi was the top hot spot in eThekweni metro with 3 474 cases and nine deaths, Phoenix was second with 1 439 cases with 11 deaths, KwaMashu was third with 1 434 cases and four deaths and Chatsworth was fourth with 1 138 cases and four deaths.

Zikalala said 3561 healthcare workers had been infected.

SA Medical Association (Sama) spokesperson Dr Mvuyisi Mzukwa said alcohol-related cases were a problem, but he also understood why the country's lockdown level went to 2.

"It is the necessary evil."

Mzukwa welcomed the idea that the infrastructure created would be used for the NHI, but said the problem was government was good at coming up with ideas but not very good at implementing them, which was the problem Sama had from the start.