

MEDIA STATEMENT

To: Editors & Health Journalists
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Health Department provides update on Cholera outbreak in South Africa

Pretoria: The Department of Health has noted a significant decline in the number of both suspected and confirmed cholera cases around the country in the past few weeks, with only one confirmed positive cholera case recorded out of 28 new suspected cases in the past 10 days.

This doesn't mean the transmission of cholera is over, and members of the public are urged to remain vigilant and exercise personal hygiene at all times, especially when preparing and serving food during mass gatherings.

The department and its stakeholders will continue with the efforts and interventions to prevent new infections mainly through health education and targeted case finding activities.

The country has recorded a total cumulative number of **1073** suspected cases of cholera in five provinces, of which **198** of them were laboratory-confirmed between 1st of February and 4 July 2023.

Gauteng Province is leading with **176** cases mostly from Hammanskraal in Tshwane, Free State **11**, North West **6 cases**, Limpopo **4 cases** and **1** case in Mpumalanga. The cases have been diagnosed at both public (94%; 186/198) and private (6%; 12/198) laboratories.

In terms of mortality rate, a total cumulative number of deaths related to cholera outbreak (both suspected and confirmed) stands at **47** as of Tuesday, 04 July 2023, and **4** new suspected deaths have been recorded (all in Free State) since the last reporting on Sunday, 25 June 2023.

The deaths distribution is presented below:

Province	Confirmed cases	Suspected cases	Total cases
Gauteng	17	18	35
Free State	2	4	6
North West	0	0	0
Limpopo	0	4	4
Mpumalanga	1	1	2
Total	20	27	47

NB: A **confirmed case of cholera** is defined as the laboratory-confirmed presence of cholera bacteria called *Vibrio cholerae* in any patient with diarrhoea.

A **suspected case of cholera** is a person of any age with or dying from acute watery diarrhoea with or without vomiting. In areas where a cholera outbreak has been declared, any person presenting with or dying from acute watery diarrhoea meets the criteria of a suspected case.

In terms of gender distribution of cholera cases/patients, females accounted for 52% which translates into 102 out of 198 confirmed cases. Age group 41-50 years accounted for 23% (46 out of 198) cases, followed by 31-40 years at 17% (33/198) and lastly 60 years and above at 13% (26/198).

Meanwhile, the department also urges all those involved in the running of initiation schools to work closely with healthcare workers in the best of initiatives to ensure that this important cultural practice takes place in compliance with relevant health and safety regulations, especially personal hygiene and provision of clean water from reliable sources to prevent the outbreak and transmission of waterborne diseases like cholera.

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