

Newsletter COMMUNIQUE

JULY 2021



**I AM
VACCINATED
ARE YOU?**

Editor's Note

The Communications Directorate is reviving the publication which reflects the internal life within the department with an aim to inform and share positive and great news about us and what we do. Hopefully, this issue will do just that. This newsletter comes with fresh news and tips about getting prepared for the Covid 19 third wave while urging those who have not been vaccinated to do so. Furthermore this newsletter will provide an update on who to bid farewell to during this month as they exit the system peacefully after serving the Department for so many years. As the saying goes "Communication is a life and blood of this organisation" we therefore do so by sharing your experiences, celebrate your successes and ultimately mobilise you to be the ambassadors of our department. Enjoy!



Wellness *Corner*



ORIENTATION OF EMPLOYEES RETURNING TO WORK

By Employee Wellness Services

REFRESHER ORIENTATION 2021

The Employee Wellness Services Directorate plays a vital role in the management of the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on employees, managing the high stress levels which may have a negative effect on employees' performance, productivity and overall job satisfaction.

The Unit organized a refresher orientation session aimed at alleviating fear and anxiety on employees who were expected to return back to work during the era of Covid – 19 pandemic. The purpose of the session was to ensure that employees can adjust and become familiar with the special arrangements that were set up in offices by way of responding to the regulations of COVID-19 by the country. The guiding principles of the orientation programme were that: -

- Offices are potentially areas of risk of infections, looking at how the virus is being spread, the necessary precautions are required in order to mitigate such risk;
- Observance and adherence to hygiene protocols was key to mitigate the spread of the virus in our offices;

- Whilst all forms of support to employees are necessary, taking accountability and responsibility for personal safety and the safety of others is paramount; and
- Communication, information sharing and rendering of support to the affected and infected was at the core of the session.

Protect yourself from Severe Covid - 19

Having a chronic condition means you are more at risk of experiencing severe COVID-19.

Ensure that: -

- You do not go out unless it is utmost necessary.
- Ask others to do the shopping and fetch your grants and medications.
- Avoid having visitors in your home.
- Keep physical distance at all times.
- Avoid crowds, close contact and confined spaces.
- Wear a mask.
- Sit outside or open the windows.
- Wash your hands often.

Keep yourself healthy:

- If you become unwell, seek healthcare promptly.
- Look after your chronic conditions. This might help prevent severe COVID-19 if you do catch coronavirus. **Get vaccinated against COVID-19.**
- If others at home have COVID-19 or had contact with someone who contracted COVID-19, isolation must be done until the stipulated time is over.

EC EDUCATION SECTOR EMPLOYEES' VACCINATION PROGRAMME

The province has achieved an overall 63 822 (85,2%) vaccination uptake against the target of 75 769 (100%). Over 11 947 teachers or employees remain unvaccinated.

All Districts performed well above 75% with BCM and Amathole leading at 95,8 and 95,2 respectively on vaccination against the target allocated to them.

Routine monitoring and evaluation of the vaccination processes commenced from day one till the last day. The success on the vaccination programme in the province can be attributed to teamwork within the Department and other critical stakeholders as well as advocacy through community radio station interviews and social media platforms which played a crucial role in the sharing of information to all employees.

What can you do to have a healthier lifestyle? Eat healthy

- Eat a variety of foods.
- If you eat large portions of food, try to take smaller portion sizes.
- Increase the intake of fruit, vegetables, nuts and legumes.
- Eat less salt. Avoid processed foods like gravy, stock cubes or packet soup.
- Reduce or cut out sugar.

Get active

- Aim for at least 30 minutes of brisk exercise 5 days a week
- Try some home exercises in your home or yard.
- Do the sweeping, garden or dance to your favourite music.
- Do an exercise programme on TV or online.
- Walk instead of using transport and take the stairs instead of the lift.
- Do not smoke or use drugs, if you need help to quit, ask your healthcare worker.
- Stop or limit alcohol. If you drink alcohol, limit intake. If you need help to quit, ask your healthcare worker.

Practice safer sex

- Have only one partner at a time.
- If you do not know your HIV status, have an HIV test.
- If needed, use condoms and reliable family planning.

"Take action to have a healthy lifestyle! Even a little activity will help to improve your mental and physical health and most importantly take control of your chronic condition/s.



RETIREMENT DR A.S. NUKU – DDG: DISTRICT EDUCATION CO-ORDINATION & INSTITUTIONAL OPERATIONS MANAGEMENT

The Department of Education hosted a send-off function to bid farewell to Dr Nuku who retired on the 31st of July 2021, for serving with distinction and humility for 39 years. Dr Nuku started his career as a teacher and due to his leadership and managerial abilities, he was promoted into various managerial positions within the Department. Dr Nuku left the department at a time while serving as a permanently employed Deputy Director General, Institutional Operations Management, since May of 2021. This is the time that Dr decided to pass the baton and change focus to the other aspects of his life. All speakers saluted Dr Nuku for his contribution in the educational sphere as well as other portfolios that he served in the society at large. The Department wishes him well in pursuing his new hopes and plans for the future with his entire family by his side.



Canteen closure leaves staff in limbo

Dineo Matroko

As part of contributing towards employee wellness, the Eastern Cape Department of Education opened a canteen at the head office precinct for employees to access warm and healthy meals.

However, over the past few years, the canteen has been unoperational leaving many without their proper and nutritious meals. Workers have now implored other avenues to obtain food outside the office precincts.

For Human Resources Admin Clerk, Themabela Khaliphi the closure of the canteen has been quite an inconvenience for her. “There’s no variety of meals from the people who sell at both entrances of the department.

So, I have to drive from the precinct to find a meal that can suit my dietary needs outside, in instances where I was unable to pack a lunch for myself. This leaves me with unnecessary costs” said Khalili. Customer Care Officer, Zanele Konza feels that the closure costs her time.

“As a customer care officer, I always have to attend to queries from people who need assistance from the department, having to drive out of the precinct to find something healthy to eat as I am a runner, is time consuming”, said Konza. The Acting Director, Employee Wellness, Ms Pula Tabata acknowledged the challenge and promised to report back to the Communique team on plans to address this issue. “Yes the canteen or food bar is now closed, but I will work with the department’s leadership to attend to it as it may have adverse financial impact in the near future. I also urge employees to please rather bring home made or buy meals from venues that observe the Covid-19 basic hygiene regulations.

This practice is meant to guarantee safety of our colleagues at all times,” urged Tabata. One thing for sure, the canteen had some impact on the staff based at the head office. Whether it will re-open soon is a question for another day.