

Violent riots affect vaccine rollout, distribution of chronic meds

The National Health Department said the rollout of the Covid-19 vaccine has been impacted in the unrest-struck provinces.



Source: www.sanews.gov.za [sanews.gov.za](http://www.sanews.gov.za)]]

In addition, the recent violent protests have also disrupted access to essential healthcare services, including collection of chronic medication for tuberculosis, HIV, diabetes and others in some areas in both KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng.

“Government and the private sector’s priority is to protect lives, and prevent harm to staff, patients, and medical supplies and property that form part of the vaccination programme.

“Consequently, government and the private sector are adopting a precautionary principle, and will be temporarily closing some vaccination sites which have been damaged, or which may be at risk,” the department said on Tuesday.

According to the department, anyone who had been scheduled to be vaccinated at sites in districts or areas that are affected by the unrest are advised to defer their vaccination.

The health department explained that the Electronic Vaccination Data System (EVDS) will automatically reschedule appointments for those unable to attend. The system is designed to reschedule up to two missed appointments.

“If it is not clear whether an area has been affected, the public is advised to contact the vaccination site to which they have been assigned before proceeding to the site for the administration of vaccines.”

In the meantime, the department said it would publicise a list of affected areas and sites as soon as it is available.

“The department is also aware that some pharmacies and medical centres have been looted, and that stock has been stolen.”

Warning

The department has since issued a warning to citizens to refrain from buying medicines offered for sale by anyone other than registered medical practitioners, pharmacies or hospitals, and to report any attempted sale to the police immediately.

“Stolen or improperly dispensed medicines are extremely dangerous, as they may not have been stored properly, may be contaminated, or may cause dangerous side effects.”

In addition, the health department said it is working closely with other departments in the security cluster and private sector to ensure that access to healthcare services and operations at vaccination sites are restored.

Everyone who is eligible and scheduled to be vaccinated in the affected areas is urged to call the Covid-19 Call Centre on 0800 029 999 or make use of the various self-help channels: vaccine.enroll.health.gov.za; WhatsApp 0600 123 56 or Dial *134*832# and reply to the messages.

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