

Ensuring SA's vaccine safety in the cold chain

To support the drive for effective Covid-19 vaccinations in South Africa, Vodacom and the Western Cape Department of Health are pleased to announce the distribution of 257 new cold-chain units, worth R3.6m, across the province.



Source: Supplied. Members of Vodacom and the Western Cape Department of Health, with Premier Alan Winde, at the announcement of the distribution of 257 new cold-chain units across the province.

The equipment enables the Western Cape Department of Health to boost Covid-19 vaccine storage and distribution, particularly to more remote areas, while maintaining vaccine efficacy.

The handover took place today at Groote Schuur Hospital in Cape Town with Western Cape Premier, Alan Winde in attendance.

This comes after Vodacom Group and Vodafone Foundation donated R74m in the procurement of cold-chain equipment, ensuring the safe delivery and administration of Covid-19 vaccines and other life-saving medicine, to several countries in sub-Saharan Africa.

South Africa has received 2,197 units of this essential equipment in the fight against the pandemic.

The units will get distributed across all nine provinces.

The 257 cold-chain units donated to the Western Cape Province consist of six vaccine freezers, 40 ice-lined vaccine

fridges, 80 cooler boxes, 125 electronic temperature loggers, two remote temperature devices and four remote probes.

Provincial supply chain

The equipment is being distributed to 51 sites across all six districts of the province: Cape Town Metro Municipality, Cape Winelands District Municipality, Central Karoo District Municipality, Garden Route District Municipality, Overberg District Municipality and West Coast District Municipality.

“As we continue to partner with the government in response to Covid-19, Vodacom wants to assist all South Africans in overcoming the challenges of the crisis. Through the investment and distribution of cold-chain equipment throughout the Western Cape, we are ensuring citizens have greater access to safely stored vaccines. This is a critical step towards building an inclusive post-pandemic future,” says Carol Hall, managing executive, Vodacom Western Cape.

The Premier of the Western Cape, Alan Winde, said: “I want to commend Vodacom for their significant and generous donation of new cold-chain units throughout the province, ensuring that more people get access to life-saving Covid-19 vaccines.

“As we exit the National State of Disaster and Disaster Regulations come to an end, each of us needs to assume greater personal responsibility [for our health]. We can do this by practising the golden rules of good hygiene. We should also protect those at risk of severe disease, by acting responsibly. Getting vaccinated is also the right choice to make so that we save lives and jobs.”



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Cold-chain management is a crucial part of ensuring a safe and effective inoculation drive. Vaccines require uninterrupted refrigeration which meet certain temperature requirements, from the place of manufacturing until the point of administration. If the cold-chain is broken at any point from arrival to administration, this may affect the effectiveness and efficacy of vaccines, which means they become potentially unsafe for immunisation.

Vaccine storage is a challenge for various countries on the African continent. A recent survey of 34 African countries by the African regional office of the World Health Organization (WHO) revealed that, in 31% of countries, more than 50% of districts have challenges with cold-chain capacity.

“The distribution of cold-chain equipment supports the national vaccination programme in ensuring vulnerable and hard-to-reach communities in the Western Cape region have access to safe vaccines.

“Moreover, the equipment can also assist government beyond the Covid-19 pandemic, with the storage and distribution of other life-saving medicine. This supports Vodacom’s social contract to help better the lives of people through technology,” adds Hall.

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