

Abdool Karim steps down

Professor Salim Abdool Karim has stepped down from Ministerial Advisory Committee (MAC) on Covid-19, exactly one year after he accepted the chair of the committee, to resume his academic pursuits.



Professor Salim Abdool Karim

"When I accepted the appointment on 23 March 2020, little did I realise how important science would be in helping our country to navigate the complexities of the coronavirus pandemic. It has been more rewarding to work along many of our country's leading scientists from a range of disciplines," he said in a statement.

“ It has been a singular honour to serve on the MAC alongside exceptional colleagues. After exactly 1 year, the time has come for me to return to my academic commitments. As I leave to refocus on HIV research, I know full well that advice on our Covid-19 response is in safe hands pic.twitter.com/XcnewEYrl3— Salim & Quarraisha Abdool Karim (@ProfAbdoolKarim) [March 25, 2021](#) ”

"We thank Professor Abdool Karim for answering the call to serve and remaining steadfast throughout his tenure as a leader in the fight against Covid-19.

The minister (of health, Dr Zweli Mkhize) is sure all South Africans will join us as we convey our deep appreciation to Prof Abdool Karim for his exceptional stewardship during one of the greatest crises faced by humanity.

"Throughout, he has remained focused, level headed, calm and compassionate, even under enormous pressure," the department of health said in a statement.

Professor Marian Jacobs, a dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences at the University of Cape Town will continue to hold the fort as a co-chair for a few more months. She assumed the position after the reconfiguration of the MAC on 14 September 2020.

Successor

Meanwhile, the minister has since announced Professor Koleka Mlisana as Abdool Karim's successor. She is already an incumbent of the MAC on COVID-19 as chair of the pathology/laboratory sub-committee.

She also serves as a member of the MAC on antimicrobial resistance.

She holds the position of executive manager of academic affairs, research and quality assurance at the National Health Laboratory Service (NHLS) since July 2018.

Before this, she was medical microbiology head of department at the University of KwaZuluNatal/Inkosi Albert Luthuli Central Hospital and served a term as a member of the NHLS Board.

She has been an active HIV/Aids researcher for over a decade, focusing on HIV prevention and pathogenesis, whilst working alongside Abdool Karim at the Centre for the Aids programme of research in South Africa (Caprisa).

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