

MEDIA RELEASE **COVID-19: PSA concerned with slow vaccine roll out amidst third wave and disruptive hard lockdown**

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EMBARGO None

ENQUIRIES communication@psa.co.za

The Public Servants Association (PSA), whilst welcoming the decision to close schools early amidst the current increase in COVID-19 infections, is extremely concerned about the slow pace of the vaccine roll out since implementation in February 2021.

The PSA believes that the school closure will assist in curbing the rapid spread of the virus during the third wave amongst parents, educators, and learners. The early school closure period should, however, also be used to prioritise and finalise vaccinations for educators.

The longer the vaccination process is delayed, the longer economic recovery will be delayed with a direct negative impact on communities. The PSA calls on Government to intensify the vaccination of the entire population rather than constantly reverting to disruptive hard lockdown measures with negative impacts on communities, job security and social activities. Health workers in both the public and private sector are exhausted after more than a year of constantly combatting COVID-19 to ensure the survival for citizens. Despite this, public health workers have been denied salary increases for two years in succession and have not received any allowance in recognition of their sacrifices and personal risks. An expedited vaccination programme will ensure that mass immunity can be reached sooner and will relieve pressure on health workers, whilst the PSA continues efforts to ensure their recognition by means of well-deserved salary increases.

The PSA calls on Government to urgently announce its plan to commence with vaccinations of the rest of the Public Service and the general public to also offer these citizens some assurance of their future social and economic activities.

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