

# Community Working Group on Health



## Press Statement

6 July 2021

### **Vaccination, adherence to Covid-19 regulations solution to ending the pandemic**

ENDING the ravaging Covid-19 pandemic in Zimbabwe requires communities, whether in rural areas or cities, to religiously adhere to regulations pronounced by the government, getting vaccinated as well as following guidelines issued by WHO on the disease, which has claimed over 3 million lives globally.

Following recent upsurge of Covid-19 cases in some parts of the country and the subsequent localized lockdowns, the government introduced new level measures. But such measures, though important, are not enough when people lack adequate information about the virus. Lack of information has resulted in vaccine hesitancy in most areas.

The Community Working Group on Health (CWGH) notes with concern that the current scenario, where most people no longer wear masks, stopped regularly washing hands or sanitizing as well as ceased practising social distancing is untenable in the wake the Covid-19 third wave outbreak that is claiming lives and causing unnecessary suffering among the people. There is a false assumption among some Zimbabweans that Covid-19 is past us or was never there in the first place, creating a sense of false security and complacency among ordinary people. The general public should appreciate that they have a collective responsibility to address this global health pandemic.

In reality, the lockdown announced by government in the country is now only on paper as communities are operating normally oblivious of the threat of this wave. None adherence of Covid-19 regulations and WHO guidelines is most pronounced in public places such as markets, funeral gatherings, public transport, water points, banks queues, liquor points, and other places where people acquire basic commodities such as supermarkets. The informal sector, where most Zimbabweans now rely on, has also thrown caution to the wind.

In the wake of the current outbreak of variant Covid-19, CWGH applauds the government for introducing stricter lockdown measures such as enforcing social distancing, the wearing of face masks, limiting gatherings and prohibition intercity travel, among others, to curb the spread of the infectious disease.

However, given the rising cases of Covid-19, widely-held myths and misconceptions about the disease, CWGH urges the government and other stakeholders need to increase and strengthen their awareness programmes to convince “Doubting Thomases” across the country that the disease is real and it kills fast. The radio, television, newspapers and social media must be inundated with clear and convincing messages to encourage eligible community members to take up vaccines willingly and to follow the stipulated guidelines.

The CWGH commends the government of Zimbabwe for the good progress with the COVID-19 vaccination. But there is urgent need to ensure continued supply of vaccines in the country. There is need to make vaccines

readily available as the current vaccine supply is not matching up with high demand of people willing to take up the vaccine. There is also need to address vaccine equity in making sure that vaccines trickle down to the rural communities as they are now some of our COVID-19 hot spots

As part of its mandate to promote health literacy among communities, CWGH has partnered with the Chitungwiza Municipality and supported by the Embassy of France to train school health coordinators and community health workers so that they could further raise awareness on, and strengthen the response to Covid-19 in schools and surrounding communities.

Initially, CWGH noted that there was vaccine hesitancy in Chitungwiza as people feared perceived side effects that were being peddled through social media. However, equipped with correct information and assurance there was a rush for vaccination resulting in increased uptake of Covid-19 vaccines in the town.

We would like to emphasise the importance of raising awareness and putting in place adequate precautionary measures to ensure the safety of every Zimbabwean. We also urge individuals to ensure personal hygiene to minimize the spread of the infectious disease. There is need to equip the enforcement forces manning the numerous police check points with COVID-19 Literacy and better interpretation of the lockdown guidelines in order to uphold human rights.

It is the duty of any responsible community or communities to protect themselves from the deadly disease and not to lower their guard as the third wave seems deadlier than the first two. Health is a right and a responsibility.

Protect yourselves and your communities.

*The Community Working Group on Health (CWGH) is a network of national membership based civil society and community based organisations who aim to collectively enhance community participation in health in Zimbabwe.*

**For further information, please contact;**

**Itai Rusike (Mr)**

Executive Director

**Community Working Group on Health (CWGH)**

4 O'Connor Crescent, Cranborne

Harare, Zimbabwe

Mobile: +263 77236 3991 / 0719363991

Tel: +26-242-573285|573286

Email: [itai@cwgh.co.zw](mailto:itai@cwgh.co.zw)

Website: [www.cwgh.co.zw](http://www.cwgh.co.zw)

**"Health is Your Right and Responsibility"**