



health

Department:  
Health  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

## Ministers' Mkhize and Zulu launch MAC for Social Behavioural Change

Health Minister Dr Zweli Mkhize and Social Development Minister Lindiwe Zulu on Youth Day launched a multi-sectoral Ministerial Advisory Committee on Social Behavioural Change as the number of COVID-19 infections continue to rise.

The team consists of leaders from faith-based organisations, civil society and labour unions.

Speaking during a digital press briefing on Tuesday, Mkhize said this social compact “is a transition from relying on enforcement to relying on the sheer goodwill and tenacity of South Africans to do what it takes to save lives and livelihoods”.

“Whilst the most urgent work of the MAC will be to facilitate diverse stakeholder cooperation in our COVID-19 response, the work naturally extends into the tenets of the Health Compact and ultimately the National Health Insurance in that it also facilitates action for fair access to quality health care and a long and healthy life for all South Africans,” Mkhize said.

“This MAC is actually inspired by you, our fellow South Africans. It was South Africans who stayed at home for five weeks; who sacrificed their places of worship; sacrificed their sport; sacrificed their favourite restaurant; sacrificed the Sunday surfs; sacrificed seeing family and friends; postponed weddings; avoided shisanyamas; and denied themselves the touch of another human.

That collective discipline and cooperation is what allowed us to flatten the curve, push the peak out by a few months, save many lives and balance our resources.”

Mkhize said behavioural change needs constant reinforcement and affirmation. “As we re-open the economy amidst rising infections, we appreciate more and more the difficulty of sustaining what feels unnatural. Behavioural change needs constant reinforcement and affirmation. It needs the entire buy-in of individuals, communities, societies, cultures and various social groupings,” he said.

“As a consultative government, we are particularly excited about this initiative as we look forward to gaining deeper insight into the desires and will of our people and how we can partner together to achieve the things we know we are capable of achieving.”

Mkhize said the COVID-19 fight is a grassroots movement. “The fight against COVID-19 is going to be won at home, in a church, in a taxi, on the streets, in a restaurant...and in every part of our social lives. It is not about whether there is a curfew or there is a policeman watching your movements. This is now about every South African taking the fight on,” he said.

“We need to build a new culture - at a ward and district level - so that everyone out there knows that there is one message, and that was the message sent to us by the President: that we need to hold each other's hands and fight this pandemic together.”

Minister Zulu said a transition in our behaviour will be difficult. “Working towards behavioural change for the good is not an easy thing to do. We as South Africans are a nation that has to work with each other, walk with each other...in fighting the scourge of COVID-19,” she said.

The role of this MAC, she said, is to provide advice on social and cultural factors and interventions that may influence the spread of COVID-19.

**Dr Lwazi Manzi**

Media Liaison Officer

For the Minister of Health

Department of Health South Africa

Tuesday, 16 June 2020