

■ INFECTION

# Increase in community transmissions in province

*Department planning for coming weeks as confirmed cases reach 702*

**MWANGI GITHAHU**  
mwang.githahu@inl.co.za

THE Western Cape has seen an increase in the number of community transmissions of Covid-19 infections, especially in the Cape Metro area.

Speaking during Premier Alan Winde's Digicon on the Coronavirus Status in the Western Cape, Provincial Health HoD Dr Keith Cloete said: "We have screened 28 718 people to date. There was a big uptick yesterday (Wednesday) after the Easter weekend, and we have sent 2 102 tests to the labs to be examined."

During the first week of testing (April 4-10) a total of 17 275 people were screened in the province. Of these, a total of 1 220 people were tested as part of the community testing initiative.

Cloete said: "We have 702 cases to date, of which 591 are in the City of Cape Town, 107 are in rural districts and four are unallocated in terms of address."

He added: "The department has found there are specific pockets in the metro where we have found cases, and our teams have been deployed to find associated cases of local transmission in these pockets."

Cloete did not say where these pockets were. Giving an overview of the community screening and testing programme, he said: "We've done 12 785 tests to date. This gave us the 702 positive cases. We've also got 205 people who have recovered in terms of having gone through the programme.

"In terms of hospitalisation, we



MASS screening in Hlazo Community Hall in Nyanga. South Africa has rolled out a mass screening programme for the coronavirus and dispatched about 10 000 field workers to check up on people. | **AYANDA NDAMANE** African News Agency ANA

have 35 people currently in hospital, of whom 16 are in ICU. That number has been increasing and we have officially recorded seven deaths in the province," he said.

Cloete added that the department's programme was geared towards understanding how these numbers would

unfold in the coming weeks. On the issue of the programme's response, he said: "In line with Professor Salim Abdool Karim, who chaired the national Ministerial Advisory Committee's presentation on Monday night, we are preparing to present a clear strategy to the provincial cabinet on

Friday morning (today)."

In a televised discussion, Karim said: "Can South Africa escape the worst of this epidemic? Is the exponential spread avoidable?"

"The answer is that it is very, very unlikely. Put simply: no, we cannot escape this epidemic."