

# **Vaccines for adolescents: Prof Abdool Karim, Tembeka Ngcukaitobi and Glenda Gray join adjudication panel**

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Advocate Tembeka Ngcukaitobi will chair a high-level panel to adjudicate on Covid-19 vaccinations for adolescents. File photo.

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Health minister Joe Phaahla has appointed a five-member appeal committee to adjudicate a challenge to the Covid-19 vaccination of adolescents between the ages of 12 and 17 years.

The organisation Free the Children – Save the Nation has formally appealed the decision to approve vaccines for children, arguing this age group is effectively not at risk from the coronavirus and therefore does not require vaccination for their protection.

The organisation – together with the ACDP, the Caring Healthcare Workers Coalition and Covid Care Alliance – late last year launched an application before the high court in Pretoria seeking an urgent interdict to halt the rollout of children's vaccinations.

In October Phaahla announced that the government would open Covid-19 vaccinations to children older than 12.

This was in line with the SA Health Products Regulatory Authority's approval of the Pfizer vaccine for vaccination of children of this age group and subsequent recommendations by the Ministerial Advisory Committee.

Under section 24A of the Medicines and Related Substances Act, the minister said he had appointed a five-member appeal committee to adjudicate on the matter. The committee members are:

- advocate Tembeka Ngcukaitobi SC, chairperson;
- Prof Salim Abdool Karim;
- Dr Stephen Schmidt;
- Dr Herman Edeling; and
- Prof Glenda Gray.

The matter is set down to be heard on February 11 and 14.