



Kenya Medical Association

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE

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KMA COVID-19 RESPONSE ADVISORY COMMITTEE (KMA-CRAC) MEETING RESOLUTIONS

At its third meeting on Saturday 11th April 2020, the Kenya Medical Association's COVID-19 Response Advisory Committee reviewed the current state of the response and issued the following recommendations:

RESOLUTIONS OF MEETING.

1. HEALTH WORKERS PROTECTION

KMA Recommends that protocols on health workers protection to be developed that will ensure health workers are protected while not being unnecessarily alienated from the community and family members, or stigmatised. The protocols will reduce the risk to the health workers and the general population.

2. COVID-19 TESTING

KMA appreciates the increase in number of COVID-19 tests that are being conducted and the plans that government is putting in place to increase number of testing sites in the counties. We continue to recommend as broad a testing strategy as possible in order to better understand the state of community spread of the pandemic.

3. COVID-19 CONTACT TRACING AND QUARANTINE

KMA lauds the government efforts as far as contact tracing is concerned. We are glad that most of the contacts of persons confirmed to have COVID-19 have been reached and tested while in quarantine. This is a key pillar in controlling the spread of this pandemic, and we urge the government to continue supporting this robust effort.

4. RISK COMMUNICATION AND STIGMA REDUCTION

KMA appreciates the difficulties in maintaining consistent communication about this pandemic in Kenya and notes the government's multi-pronged approach in communicating to Kenyans. We however note the increasing stigmatisation of COVID-19 patients, and we recommend as follows in order to improve communication and reduce stigma:

- a) Communication on COVID-19 must shift away from asking people to report 'suspects' as if they are criminals, to encouraging people to come forward in case they have had contact with someone with COVID-19, or have symptoms of disease and they will receive adequate testing and care. The message of social responsibility and solidarity must be emphasised, and methods to trace contacts and patients must not be unnecessarily punitive.
- b) There needs to be clarity around quarantine and management of hotel costs during this period, given that there have been challenges around what happens to people who have been tested and their results take a few days to come back. KMA recommends that government covers quarantine costs for such persons should they need to wait overnight or longer for results, in order to avoid sending them home and then spending resources tracking them down to communicate the results.

5. RESOURCES ALLOCATION FOR COVID-19 PRIORITIES

KMA appreciates that there are many resource mobilisation efforts to support the response to this pandemic and lauds the government for forming a team to manage the resources so mobilised. We also note that a lot of emphasis is being placed on acquiring ventilators and other important critical care equipment. In this regard, KMA recommends as follows:

- a) The government should prioritise increasing testing capacity, protection of health workers, and management of mild to moderate illness in order to reduce disease severity that would require more critical care.
- b) As testing and treatment capacity is increased, we urge government to ensure that human resource capacity is also increased, and the hiring of new health workers must be fast-tracked
- c) We urge all decision-makers to ensure that medical experts are involved in setting priorities even if the decisions are being made in an expedited manner; the KMA COVID-19 Response Advisory Committee stands ready to provide this expertise when requested.

The Committee will meet again on **Wednesday 15th April 2020** to review the situation and issue further guidance and recommendations.

Signed,



**Dr. Jacqueline Kitulu,
President.**