

MEDIA RELEASE **COVID-19: PSA deeply concerned about vaccine rollout**

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The Public Servants Association (PSA), which represents close on 240 000 public-sector employees including thousands of frontline workers, is extremely concerned about pace of the rollout of COVID-19 vaccines.

Recent media reports revealed that AstraZeneca vaccines, which have now been temporarily placed on hold, were more effective against a mild and moderate form of the B.1.351 coronavirus variant first identified in South Africa. Further evidence collected showed that the AstraZeneca vaccine was less effective against the new variant, which is prevalent in South Africa.

South Africa cannot afford to wait any longer for its citizens to be vaccinated and calls on government to go the extra mile to ensure the procurement of other available vaccines from other countries. It will, however, serve no purpose to inoculate people with a vaccine that is not effective.

The PSA is concerned that the anticipated herd immunity will now be even further delayed, which may result in unnecessary fatalities of frontline workers. This rollout catastrophe will contribute to more doubts and fuel the negative narrative towards the vaccination in general, which must be guarded against at all cost. The PSA therefore calls for stringent measures to be in place to prevent the re occurrence of such setback.

The PSA further calls on Government to ensure that the necessary tests are conducted on all other vaccines that South Africa intends to procure to prevent similar incidents. Government should further launch a campaign to ensure that citizens do not become anti-vaccine supporters amidst the setback with the AstraZeneca vaccine.

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