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Dr D Motau
Head of Department
Department of Health
Free State Province
Private Bag X 227
Bloemfontein

Dear Dr Motau

**REQUEST FOR YOUR PROVINCE TO SUPPORT THE NATIONAL HIV
PREVALENCE, INCIDENCE AND BEHAVIOUR SURVEY (SABSSM VI) 2021 TO
BE CONDUCTED BY HUMAN SCIENCE RESEARCH COUNCIL (HSRC)
COMMENCING IN JANUARY 2021 - MARCH 2022**

The HSRC, in collaboration with NDOH, provinces and implementing partners including SANAC, the South African Medical Research Council (SAMRC), National Institute of Communicable Diseases (NICD), University of Cape Town, UNAIDS, UNICEF as well as the USA's Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in South Africa is planning to commence implementation of the Sixth (6th) wave of the house hold study.

The HSRC has received approval to undertake the survey (SABSSM VI) from all nine provincial research committees as well as for returning of HIV test results to participants who wish to know their HIV status and for waste disposal use at local clinics within the areas in which the survey will be conducted. In addition to this, they would also like to provide participants who so wish with an additional option for undergoing rapid HTS just immediately after participating in the survey and be linked to further management and care including viral load, HIV drug resistance and/or infant HIV tests.

Selected PEPFAR partners will provide rapid HTS in the 27 priority districts or parts thereof, that they are operating in. NDOH is requesting for your support for the same in the remaining non PEPFAR supported districts within your province as well as parts of the 27 PEPFAR priority districts not covered by PEPFAR partners. Both SANAC and NDOH are full partners on this project and implementing rapid HTS testing in areas where the study will take place alongside the HSRC's fieldwork teams will be one part of our contribution in kind to this critical survey.

Objectives of the study are as follows:

- To determine the HIV status of participants.
- To estimate the number of individuals who were recently infected
- To determine if HIV positive participants are taking antiretroviral medicine
- To assess the level of resistance to ARVs by those already on treatment
- To identify the prevalence of behavioral and social factors that puts South Africans at risk of contracting the HI virus.

Outcomes of the study are as follows:

- Correct and early diagnosis of HIV positive individual and linkage to care
- Improved initiation and adherence to treatment of those on treatment
- Monitoring and evaluation of the level of resistance to ARVs by those already on treatment
- Assessed the progress towards reaching the second and the third 90 outlined in UNAIDS 90-90-90 targets
- Assessed the achievement of HIV epidemic if controlled.

It is against this background that the NDOH would like to request for your support and participation of your province in the process.

Please contact the Director for HIV Prevention Programmes, Dr Thato Chidarikire, at the following contacts for further clarity on the matter. Email: thato.chidarikire@health.gov.za; Cell: 0828772410 or Ms Kgomotso Kwenje 012 395 8221 – Email: kgomotso.kwenje@health.gov.za

Regards



Dr SSS Buthelezi
Director General of Health

Date: 2020/12/10