



Dear Team

If the last 20 months of trying to fight the Covid-19 pandemic has taught us anything, it is that vaccinations have been the game changer in this battle. Available medical data shows that Covid-19 vaccines are the best protection available against severe illness, hospitalisation or death, in the event of infection. The numbers speak for themselves. In October, the national Department of Health reported that 80% of those hospitalised as a result of Covid-19 were unvaccinated. Recently, we have seen the Omicron variant cause a surge in infections, although we have not yet seen a correlating rise in hospitalisation.

As we are aware, despite our Government's extensive efforts to promote the vaccination rollout, the uptake has been low. Vaccine hesitancy is holding back this country and its recovery. In 2019, the World Health Organisation named this as one of the top 10 threats to global health. We have seen this threat play itself out in 2021 as we struggled to get enough South Africans to get vaccinated.

As an employer, AfroCentric needs to provide all employees with a work environment that does not pose risks to their health and safety. Going forward, we also have an obligation to reassure our clients, namely members, healthcare providers and scheme sites that our employees are fully vaccinated. We, therefore, consider mandatory vaccination of our employees as a necessary and reasonable measure to ensure a safe and healthy workplace.

I am encouraged that as at 25 January 2022, 88% of our staff reported that they are fully vaccinated. However, through our verification process and request for vaccination certificates, our numbers sit at a 31% confirmed vaccination rate. In light of the above, we have decided to make vaccinations mandatory across the Group at all levels effective 1 April 2022. This includes permanent and temporary staff, including contractors, consultants and employees who have signed Work From Home contracts.

While we will be requiring every employee in the AfroCentric Group, in our South African businesses, to be vaccinated, we do recognise that there may be exceptions to this process. We are currently finalising a detailed exception application process that staff will be at liberty to follow should they require exemption. A committee consisting of medical professionals, legal, business, Human Capital and the Employee Relations representative will be constituted as the review panel.

I am fully aware that some will question why the need to impose mandatory vaccinations. The truth is, for many, the pandemic is an existential crisis that has affected all of us in one way or the other. We have also witnessed how our economy has been ravaged by this pandemic. Given also that natural immunity from previous infection loses effectiveness as time passes, research indicates that vaccination remains a consistent way to safeguard ourselves against illness. We are also mindful of the many employees who have already been vaccinated that have asked us how we will keep them safe. Some of the unintended consequences, for example, avoiding an increase in Group Life premiums is further mitigated through this decision.

To reach this decision we have conducted an extensive risk assessment of our current environment and we are confident that we are making the best decision for the AfroCentric Group.

We acknowledge the complexity of this process and the related impact that it may have for some of our employees. We wish to reassure you that we intend to provide support, information and to create various platforms to hear from you. We look forward to our future engagements.

To this effect, you can reach out to this Change mailbox: vaccineprocess@afrocentric.com Further to this, please do read the FAQ document that provides information on topical matters relating to vaccinations.

As a responsible corporate citizen, it is the right thing to do and we look to you for your support and active participation in achieving a safe working and conducive environment for all our employees, partners and clients.

Healthier Together
Ahmed