

Heal Zimbabwe

lockdown update (4 May 2020)

Introduction

On the 19th of April, Zimbabwe extended its lockdown with 14 days as a way of escalating measures of reducing the spread of COVID-19. The country's extension illustrates the government's commitment towards effectively containing the virus in the country. The current partial lockdown relaxed restrictions on mining companies, agricultural and food producers, among others as a way of ensuring constant supply of revenue to the government and food. The government also rolled out social assistance programs for vulnerable households including the elderly, vendors and People with Disabilities as a way of reinforcing the lockdown extension. The government's Task Force on COVID-19 also intensified its outreach activities to establish district and provincial isolation centres for cases of COVID-19 across the country.

Issues covered in this Update

Given the increase in government efforts to contain the virus, Heal Zimbabwe's Early Warning and Early Response Situation Room increased the number of the indicators it was tracking in relation to the fight against COVID-19 in the country. In this report, Heal Zimbabwe's Early Warning and Early Response Situation Room provides an update on: how communities are responding to the extended lockdown, availability and cost of basic commodities such as mealie-meal and cooking oil, people's access to savings, the conduct of lockdown enforcement officers, the availability and quality of health care services for COVID-19 and other diseases, and the availability of information on COVID-19 in local communities.

Methodology

A total of 4 000 trained Early Warning and Early Response Committee members and at least 5 000 community members who participate in HZT's outreach activities, CBOs operating in areas where Heal Zimbabwe operates and Heal Zimbabwe's Peace Clubs provide and verify information in this update.

Presentation of Updates

Manicaland Province

Mutare

On the 3rd of May, there was a massive sale of homemade face masks in Chikanga Market, ranging from ZWL\$5.00 to ZWL\$15.00. There were no hygiene practices because customers

were stampeding for the masks. This was after government had issued a directive that from the 4th of May, people who do not put on masks while they get into town or shopping centres will be arrested.

Nyanga

Community members from Ward 18 stayed in their homes. There was no police or army to enforce the lockdown. Most shops in the Ward adhered to opening from 0900 to 1500 hours, sanitizing their clients at entrances and encouraging customers to exercise social distancing during shopping. Ruchera clinic in ward 16 was open and has adequate kits to test and treat malaria. Village health workers were also raising awareness in their communities, encouraging community members to seek medical attention in the event that they get infected by malaria.

Matabeleland North

Umzingwane

Most women in Umzingwane failed to register for Post COVID-19 stimulus package stating that they were not aware of such a facility from government. The call for applications was sent on Whatsapp and did not reach many informal sector traders. Women also highlighted that the lockdown made women extremely vulnerable and yet could still not report abuses due to travel restrictions.

Lupane

Community members from around Lupane centre were gathered at Gains where there was subsidized mealie-meal. Most of the people were wearing different kinds of face masks with the majority being homemade. There was also strict reinforcing of compulsory wearing of face masks by the police at Lupane Centre. Vegetable vendors were also back in the centre, selling their vegetables. Zapalala and Gains supermarkets were demanding that one wears a mask in order for him or her to enter into the supermarket. Late in the afternoon, civil servants and other employees were also screened for COVID-19 at Lupane bus terminus. Proper face masks and homemade masks range between ZWL\$10.00 and ZWL\$100.00. There was also increased volume of highway traffic along the Bulawayo Victoria Falls road. All shops including restaurants were open. At Tshongokwe irrigation, most people were buying vegetables in bulk to supply various markets in Lupane. Most of these people had home-made face masks. At the Gwaai, only a few people were wearing masks. Most shops including restaurants and fashion stores were open. Most informal carpentry workers at St Lukes were operating today with most carpenters wearing face masks. At the hospital, food and airtime vendors also resumed their operations while wearing masks.

Harare Metropolitan Province

Hopley

Today the 4th of May, residents who were spotted without masks in Hopley were chased and beaten by the police. Most people in Hopley could not afford face masks. This was also as a result of the fact that people in Hopley have limited information on level 2 lockdown conditions as they relied heavily on information from social media. Some community members had to share masks so that they can go out for water, and basic commodities, posing a higher risk of contracting the virus.

Mashonaland West Province

Magunje

Today, people continued to stay in their homes. Police officers were enforcing the lockdown at Murereshi bridge which links Ward 10 and Ward 11. They have been monitoring this area as they have been reports that community members were going in their numbers for fishing and end up drinking alcohol disregarding social distancing. Magunje Business Centre shops were open from morning till 3 pm. Magunje Rural Hospital is opening at 9am everyday and assisting patients with antibiotics like paracetamol. It also has malaria test-kits and malaria medication as there is an outbreak in ward 10 and 11.

Chinhoyi

There is an increase in the number of people getting in Chinhoyi town since the announcement of lockdown extension. Clothing and stationery shops were open today, while illegal money changers were also dotted around the town, going about their business. Police were encouraging people to wear masks in business places including banks, supermarkets and other public places.

Hurungwe

Community members in ward 24 and 25 stayed in their homes. Yesterday, the 3rd of May, police officers were spotted at Zvipani Business Centre in ward 25 urging citizens to stay in their homes and avoid gatherings. Chiroti clinic and Deve clinic were open and assisting patients with regular checkups while suspected cases of COVID -10 were being referred to Karoi Hospital.

