

Covid-19 global health emergency over, but pandemic not over - Health Dept

The Department of Health says it has noted an announcement by the World Health Organisation (WHO) that Covid-19 no longer constitutes a public health emergency of international concern.



Source: [Pexels](#)

“However, it is important to clarify that this doesn’t mean the pandemic is over,” the department said on Saturday, 6 May.

“The fact of the matter is, the pandemic remains an important cause of morbidity and mortality especially in high-risk populations such as the elderly and people living with co-morbidities.”

The department explained that the number of cases is far lower at the current moment than during the height of the pandemic, hence it is no longer viewed as a public health emergency.

Meanwhile, the department, in line with WHO recommendations, continues to recommend vaccination especially for high routine health services and will continue to offer services aimed at preventing and treating Covid, including vaccination services.

On Thursday, 4 May, the health minister, Joe Phaahla, warned the Presidential Health Summit delegates that Covid-19 is not over.

He announced that the country still has about 25 million vaccine doses and urged those who have not had their booster shots to get the jab, as winter approaches.



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Katja Hamilton 28 Apr 2023



WHO director-general, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, said emergency committee members highlighted the decreasing trend in Covid-19 deaths, the decline in Covid-19 related hospitalisations and intensive-care unit admissions, and the high levels of population immunity to Sars-CoV-2.

“The committee’s position has been evolving over the last several months. While acknowledging the remaining uncertainties posted by potential evolution of Sars-CoV-2, they advised that it is time to transition to long-term management of the Covid-19 pandemic.”

He said Covid-19 is now an established and ongoing health issue which no longer constitutes a public health emergency of international concern (PHEIC).

Ghebreyesus said the end of the Covid-19 global health emergency is a moment for reflection.

“The painful lessons we have learned, the investments we have made, and the capacity we have built must be transformed into meaningful and lasting change.”

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