



**Republic of Namibia**  
**Ministry of Health and Social Services**

**Statement**

By

***Dr Richard Nchabi Kamwi, MP***  
***Minister of Health and Social Services***

**MEDIA RELEASE ON THE STATUS OF THE H1N1  
2009 EPIDEMIC AND THE MEASLES EPIDEMIC  
IN NAMIBIA**

***04 September 2009***  
***GE14, Conference Room, Head Quarters, MoHSS***

I would like to use this opportunity to update the nation on the H1N1 and Measles Epidemics currently affecting our people.

The Ministry of Health and Social Services appreciates the concerns raised by individuals, communities, and political parties regarding the increasing number of Pandemic H1N1 cases in the country.

The Ministry is actively coordinating our strategy to prevent the further spread of the illness and especially to minimize severe cases or even fatalities. We will continue together with our development partners, the media, health workers both in the public and private sector to inform the nation on how to avoid getting infected with the virus and to stop its spread once one is infected.

The current guidelines require only selected suspected cases to be tested based on set criteria. Similarly, treatment is restricted to those patients with severe illness and underlying medical conditions. Most patients can be managed at home and without any antiviral medicine.

It is important for patients to stay at home for at least 5-7 days and minimize contact with people for the period indicated. Those with symptoms should report to the nearest health facility or doctor if the symptoms become worse. I just want to stress the signs and symptoms as follows:

- Fever
- Coughing

- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Body aches
- Headache
- Chills
- Fatigue
- Diarrhea and vomiting are also reported in some cases
- Death may occur in severe cases

To date Namibia has reported 44 confirmed cases. The increased number of positive cases reported is an indication that the virus is now circulating widely in our population.

Unfortunately, I have to inform the nation that Namibia has recorded the first fatality cases of H1N1. This is a 37 year old man who fell ill while in Angola. He then developed severe pneumonia and was seen by a Namibian private medical practitioner at a time when the disease had progressed severely.

I wish to use this opportunity on behalf of the Ministry of Health and Social Services and indeed myself to extend our heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family and friends of the deceased.

May I once again use this opportunity to appeal to the nation: Please when you experience flu like symptoms as I said earlier and you do not improve after five (5) days, please, you are advised to immediately consult with the health workers at any nearest clinic or any health facility and/or to a private medical practitioner for a proper medical check-up.

Most importantly, those at higher risk including pregnant women, children under five (5) years, older persons and people with chronic diseases, e.g. asthmatic and those who are immune compromised should take immediate action to seek medical check-up.

The National Emergency Management Committee is monitoring the situation very closely and will ensure that the necessary steps are taken to contain the spread of the virus and mitigate its impact.

Programme Director, Ladies and Gentlemen

Let me now come to the measles outbreak reported in the Oshana region and especially within the jurisdiction of Engela district. From the 31 July 2009 Engela district had been experiencing increasing number of suspected Measles cases. The index case is a 33 year old Angolan man from Oshana who also stayed several weeks in Oipapakane village close to Helao Nafidi town. Since then to date, there is a total of 48 Measles suspected cases of which 13 cases (27%) were laboratory confirmed. Five (38%) of this number are under 5 year old children.

All these cases apart from one are from Santa Clara, Angola. Clearly, 64% of all laboratory confirmed cases are from Cunene province, in Angola with the remainder 36% being Namibians.

I wish to inform that training for nurses and doctors on measles management already took place. In addition, training in integrated Disease Surveillance and Response will continue in line with our plans of actions for all state and private health practitioners in Engela.

Daily disease surveillance reporting is being conducted. Meanwhile, routine vaccination continues in all health facilities in Engela district.

A measles vaccination campaign targeting children from six (6) Months to five (5) years with technical assistance from World Health Organization (WHO) will be conducted in Engela health district.

I want to appeal to all our mothers and guardians of our children younger than 5 years of age! Please make sure that your children's immunization schedule is up to date at all times.

Finally, the Ministry would like to call upon the entire nation to remain calm and follow the advice given by health workers with regard to both these outbreaks.

Thank you