



Transport & Logistics Industry COVID-19 Strategic Response

Introduction:

The Walvis Bay Corridor Group (WBCG), through its Wellness Programme, operates fixed wellness clinics in Katima Mulilo, Oshikango, Walvis Bay and Windhoek as well as the newly established centers in Gobabis and Otjiwarongo. This is complemented by agile mobile wellness clinics that respond to the needs of the industry and can be moved to any location depending on the needs of the sector. These services are complemented by workplace wellness programmes that are tailor made to the specific needs of our members.

This is to augment ongoing efforts of the Ministry of Health and Social Services (MoHSS) as per the Operational Cooperative Agreement signed between WBCG and MoHSS in 2016. The primary aim of this agreement is to ensure the provision targeted health services to highly vulnerable key and mobile populations such as long distance truck drivers, sex workers and community members within the vicinity of cross border towns, as identified through the National Strategic Framework on HIV/AIDS response in Namibia (NSF, 2018-2022).

Following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, WBCG is in support of the safety measures and protocols implemented by the Government of the Republic of Namibia to curb the spread of this virus and will be adhering to the instructed lockdown directive as a precautionary measure.

As an essential service provider, our wellness clinics will remain open as per usual. This is to ensure continuity of strategic clinical services and to compliment the current efforts of MoHSS in the response to COVID-19. In particular, the focus will be on ensuring that mobile populations such as truck drivers and other vulnerable key populations are continuously sensitized and screened for both COVID-19 and HIV AIDS that our core health and wellness interventions at facility level are maintained. Our mobile wellness clinics will equally be on standby to navigate to other hotspots around the country where health and wellness services will be required. WBCG views transporters and in particular the truck drivers as valuable assets of our economy and of utmost importance. Hence, WBCG will support all efforts to ensure their well-being and safety, as well as safe delivery of cargo.

Observations:

1. How are we protecting the health of truck drivers and their families during the COVID-19 pandemic?
2. Companies to consider special sick leave for truck drivers and other employees in the transport industry while on quarantine, to avoid exhaustion of their normal sick leave benefits.
3. Challenges to implement the quarantine recommendations for truck drivers.
4. Truck drivers concerned about losing their jobs and or commission earned on driving if quarantined.
5. If truck drivers are completely exempted from quarantine measures, there is a risk of transmission to their families, workplace colleagues and the general public.
6. How will adherence to quarantine measures for truck drivers be monitored while in transit.
7. Who will monitor adherence to quarantine measures for truck in transit.
8. Concern with sustainability of facility based quarantine due to cost involved.
9. Transport company owners concerned about losing out on business if/when their driver is quarantined.
10. Not adequate information on COVID-19 is disseminated to truck drivers from the workplace and along the transport corridors.
11. Lack of rapid testing resources and or facilities for truck drivers to enable them to obtain results fast to allow them to proceed with their cargo.
12. Urgent need to find a balance between transporting of essential goods and drivers health and safety.

WBCG Recommendations/Proposed Strategies:

1. Transporters to encourage their drivers to visit the WBCG Clinics in Oshikango, Katima Mulilo and Walvis Bay for COVID-19 screening. Transporters to also encourage their drivers to comply with other similar measures in adjoining states where they may transit.
2. Transport Companies to raise awareness and provide factual information about COVID-19 before, during and after all trips for their drivers.
3. Drivers to be encouraged to share this information with their families.
 - a) Basic information to be shared with all drivers by their company before they load and embark upon their journeys.
 - b) Company representative to track and check up on the drivers throughout the journey to ensure that they are fine and adhering to national preventive measures and guidelines.
 - c) Owners Encourage drivers to seek medical assistance along the journey if they feel sick by calling the **toll free number 0800 100 100**. The discussion should address safe parking of the truck to secure cargo safety, but this must not be done at the expense of human life.

As per the recently released guidelines by the MoHSS in terms of inbound delivery trucks, the following is to be noted:

Inbound trucks are managed at the border by the following Government structures:

- ⇒ The **immigration officials** carry out enhanced and thorough immigration functions as per prescribed standard operations.
 - ⇒ The **customs officials** carry out enhanced and thorough immigration functions as per prescribed standard operations.
 - ⇒ The public health officials do thorough screening at the borders. The WBCG through its Wellness programme will be assisting with this process at borders hosting our roadside wellness clinics.
- d) After all the procedures have been completed at the borders, the truck drivers receive a proof of clearance by the immigration officials before proceeding to the final destination. Truck owners are encouraged to always remind their drivers to ensure that they have this clearance with them at all times to avoid any inconveniences along the corridor routes.
 - e) At the check points, the truck drivers present proof of clearance to the law enforcement officers at the point of entry into the lockdown region. **NO ANY OTHER PROCEDURES ARE TO BE CARRIED OUT AT THE CHECK POINT.**
 - f) Upon arrival at the final destination, the following need to happen:
 - ⇒ The public health official is informed and arrive at the destination point.
 - ⇒ The truck owner shall arrange for the quarantine of the truck driver.
 - ⇒ The public health official ensures compliance with the quarantine regime with the assistance of the Namibian Police.
 - g) Company to devise alternative plan such as availing a replacement driver without dismissing the quarantined driver.
 - h) Company to continue supporting the quarantined driver both psychologically and financially wherever possible.
 - i) Companies to provide drivers with COVID-19 tollfree numbers in respective countries.
 - j) The WBCG through its Wellness Service will at all times provide support to the transport and logistics industry and the Ministry of Health and Social Services.
4. Transport companies to share contact details of their drivers so that the WBCG can create and maintain a database of all truck drivers on the road. This database will help to track the driver and send them regular COVID-19 information on WhatsApp/sms, as well as to provide them with fast clinical services while on the road or when they arrive at their destination.
 5. WBCG to provide COVID-19 factual information to all truck drivers upon arrival at the relevant cross border sites.
 6. WBCG to conduct COVID-19 screening services using thermometers for all clients and provide point of care testing for all suspected cases.
 7. Integrate COVID-19 prevention strategies into current HIV/AIDS prevention, testing and treatment strategies.
 8. Maintaining key clinical services such as ART retention during and beyond the lockdown period.
 9. WBCG to procure COVID-19 medical consumables and extend screening and testing strategies to the transport and logistics industry. Sponsorships will be required.

10. WBCG is sending out sponsorship request letters to various stakeholders including the SADC Secretariat and other International development partners to request for support to procure medical items such as, Digital Infrared Thermometers (non-contact), COVID-19 test kits (PCR), masks, gloves, sanitizers, protective suits, sanitizers etc. These items will be used to screen people working in the transport and logistics industry and other affected populations in collaboration with the MoHSS.
11. Namibian guideline states that a suspect will only be tested if they have been screened by a health professional and found to have symptoms that meet the standard case definition. (Please see below Standard Case definition note).

Case definitions: COVID-19

- **Suspected Case:**

- A patient with acute respiratory illness (fever and at least one sign or symptom of respiratory disease (e.g. cough, shortness of breath) AND with no other etiology that fully explains the clinical presentation AND a history of travel to or residence in a country/area or territory reporting local transmission of COVID-19 during the 14 days prior to symptom onset

OR

- A patient with any acute respiratory illness AND having been in contact with a confirmed or probable COVID-19 case in the last 14 days prior to symptom onset

OR

- A patient with any acute respiratory illness AND requiring hospitalization AND with no other etiology that fully explains the clinical presentation

To arrange any collaborative interventions in this regard, please contact us at :

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