

GOVERNOR BABAJIDE SANWO-OLU'S CORONAVIRUS PRESS  
STATEMENT – JULY 11, 2021

*Fellow Lagosians,*

It has become imperative to once again provide you an update on the Coronavirus pandemic situation in Lagos State, and our ongoing response as a State Government.

Starting around the end of March 2021, the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic in Lagos State began to wind down, and we began to enjoy some reprieve from the worst effects of the virus. This allowed us to further open-up the economy to allow the start of the journey towards full normalcy in our lives and the pursuit of livelihoods, after what has been a very difficult year.

Regrettably, in spite of the hard work and dedicated efforts towards sustaining the return to normalcy, over the last three months, we are now finding ourselves at what appears to be the start of a potential 3<sup>rd</sup> wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, in Lagos State.

From the beginning of July, we started to experience a steep increase in the number of daily confirmed cases, with the test positivity rate going from 1.1% at the end of June 2021 to its current rate of 6.6% as at 8<sup>th</sup> of July 2021. The rapid increase within a week gives great cause for concern. Also, within the last two weeks, the occupancy rate at our

isolation centres increased from an average of 1% to 6%. This is the new and disturbing reality that now confronts us.

But we must not be demoralized by this. We must instead resolve that we will not leave any stone unturned in our bid to effectively mitigate the third wave of this pandemic in Lagos State. As you all know, Lagos has been the epicentre of the pandemic since the start, and the way we manage it here has a significant impact and reverberating effect on the national outlook and outcomes. So, Nigeria is counting on us in Lagos State to be resolute in our stand against the virus.

We will continue to test aggressively. We will also focus on sequencing the samples we are collecting to ensure we are detecting and keeping track of the different variants in circulation. It is only by testing and sequencing comprehensively that we can collect the data required for informed decision-making.

### **Epidemiology Update**

As at the 7<sup>th</sup> of July 2021, Lagos State had recorded a total of **60,202** confirmed cases of COVID-19. Of this number, **55,135** have recovered in-community and **770** are currently being managed actively in-community. Over the course of managing the COVID-19 pandemic, about **4,382** patients have been admitted into our various COVID-19 care centres in Lagos: with **357** registered fatalities.

In all we have tested **563,679** samples in Lagos State since the pandemic started. Today we have **30** accredited testing centers: **26** private and **4** public health laboratories in the State, a significant improvement in capacity over the course of the past year.

### **Accredited Health Facilities**

Let me make it clear that outside of the health facilities accredited for the management and treatment of COVID-19, and the EKOTELEMED program, no other health facilities, whether public or private, are permitted to admit or attend to COVID-19 patients.

The Lagos State Health Facility Monitoring and Accreditation Agency (HEFAMAA) is providing monitoring and surveillance and has been mandated to apply heavy fines and other punitive measures on all facilities found to be in violation of this.

Lagosians should desist from patronizing non-accredited COVID-19 treatment centers, and proprietors should also ensure that all suspected and confirmed cases are referred appropriately.

### **Vaccine Distribution and Access**

One of the major tenets of our mitigation strategy against the 3<sup>rd</sup> wave is our vaccination campaign, similar to other parts of the world. It has been observed by various credible studies that those that have received their

vaccines have demonstrated significant resistance to the effects of the virus, with fewer associated complications and deaths.

As of today, however, the percentage of residents of Lagos who have received two (2) doses of the vaccine stands at a mere 1%. We recognise that this is not adequate, and given the imminent third wave, and our priority to reduce COVID-19 related deaths, we are exploring all avenues possible to ramp up access to vaccination so as to reach our herd immunity target of at least 60% COVID-19 vaccination coverage of the population of Lagos State. We are confident that we will be getting a second batch of vaccines very soon, to kick-start the second phase of vaccinations.

### **Travel Protocols for in-Bound Passengers**

Between 8th May 2021 and 7th July 2021, a total of 50,322 passengers of interest arrived in Lagos via the Murtala Mohammed Airport. Of the 50,322 passengers, 18 percent could not be reached by EKOTELEMED because of the provision of either wrong numbers or wrong Nigerian contact details to be reached on.

It is the responsibility of passengers to ensure they provide the right details for us to reach them for proper monitoring. Going forward, passengers that do not provide the right details, including a phone number they can be reached for monitoring and an address for isolation,

will face serious sanctions including fines and imprisonment according to our Lagos State Coronavirus Law of 2021.

### **Sanctions Against Quarantine Defaulters**

As dictated by the Presidential Steering Committee on COVID-19 (PSC), passengers from red-listed countries (India, South Africa, Brazil and Turkey) are required to observe mandatory isolation. So far, we have successfully isolated 2,386 passengers in Lagos State. Of this number, 15% have absconded.

The following sanctions are being recommended and have already been meted out to defaulters:

- For Foreigners: Revocation of their Permanent Residency, and deportation; and
- For Nigerians: Prosecution to the full extent of the Lagos State COVID-19 Law.

### **Religious Activities**

Greater vigilance is required at this time in our Churches and Mosques and other places of religious worship. Even as we are pleased that religious houses are now open for worship, after the lengthy closures of

2020, we must not allow ourselves to be carried away by the illusion that all is now back to normal. This is especially critical, as Sallah approaches, in a little over a week from now.

The festivities will no doubt bring people together in large numbers and create conditions that can sadly cause the spread of the Coronavirus. We must not allow this to happen.

For this reason, **we are mandating full compliance** with all protective protocols. Compulsory use of masks in all public places, Social distancing, Temperature checks, Provisions for hand-washing and sanitizers, and a maximum of 50 percent occupancy in enclosed spaces.

### **Resisting Pandemic Fatigue**

Whilst both the Federal and State Governments have a huge role to play in the management of the COVID-19 pandemic, the responsibility of managing the third wave ultimately belongs to all of us.

Without the cooperation of the public at large, we stand the risks of losing both lives and livelihood, on a devastating scale. Therefore, I would like to once again reiterate that this is not the time to get tired or complacent. Instead we must be re-energized to battle this invisible and seemingly relentless enemy.

After almost 18 months of daily confronting this virus, it is understandable that many are tired and want their old, pre-pandemic

lives to return. Unfortunately, we do not have a choice in this regard, and fatigue is not an option. We cannot afford to be tired, frustrated or distracted.

The enemy is formidable - and opportunistic. It will only go as far as we allow it. Having triumphed over the first and second waves of the pandemic, we must now find within ourselves new reserves of energy to quell this emerging third wave before it snowballs out of control. Let me assure us all that victory over COVID-19 is much closer today than at any other point in our recent history. But we must persevere to see this victory. We must maintain our vigilance even as we ramp up the vaccination coverage.

At this point, I would like to thank all the members of the Incident Command Structure for their resilience in the management of this never-ending pandemic, and also the Federal Government, through the Presidential Steering Committee, for all their support and collaboration.

Lagos State will continue to work with all our partners, across government and the private sector, to ensure that we permanently triumph over this virus. We will not rest until this is achieved.

**Babajide Olusola Sanwo-Olu**

**Incident Commander**

**July 11, 2021**