



Machakos County Converts Kenyatta Stadium into a Make-Shift Hospital in the Fight against COVID-19

In preparation for the rising incidences of positive Covid-19 cases in the country, Machakos County has put in place innovative measures in an emergency response. In addition to several interventions to safeguard public health and reduce the potential for spread of the corona virus, the county has sought to increase its ability to admit and manage patients testing positive to covid-19.

The county has recently converted the Kenyatta Stadium into a temporary hospital for mass testing and isolation to treat mild and moderate cases of covid-19 infections. The sixty-bed hospital is made out of a tent erected at the stadium and installed testing equipment. The bed capacity can be expanded up to four hundred (400) should it be necessary to admit more people. The goal of the Governor is to have a bed capacity of one thousand (1000) for Isolation in the County. This concept was adopted globally by other nations including: China, Australia and Brazil in the fight against covid-19.

The process of converting the stadium into a temporary hospital for the county was simple since the county did not have to demolish any existing structures. The county also utilized existing facilities like the available washrooms. Smaller tents were erected to be used as labs housing testing equipment. Awareness on the facility and generally on coronavirus is done through local media stations and administrators both at ward and sub location levels.

In its decision to convert the stadium into a temporary hospital, distance was among the key factors that the county put into consideration in case of any medical emergencies The stadium is situated two hundred (200) meters of less from Machakos Level 5 Hospital, which in turn makes it efficient for any anticipated emergencies that will require patients to be moved to the Intensive Care Unit (ICU). It is also worth noting that the ICU at Machakos level 5 hospital has 10 ventilators in place and the county is in process of procuring 10 more.

About Machakos County

Machakos County has eight (8) constituencies namely: - Machakos Town, Mavoko, Masinga, Yatta, Kangundo, Kathiani, Matungulu, and Mwala. Machakos Town is the administrative capital of the County. The County borders Nairobi and Kiambu Counties to the West, Embu to the North, Kitui to the East, Makueni to the South, Kajiado to the South West, and Murang'a and Kirinyaga to the North West. The County currently has a population of 1,421,932¹ people, and it is rapidly growing. The County headquarters are located in Machakos Town.



The short distance between the stadium and the level 5 hospital also makes movement of health workers efficient. By adopting the use of a tent, the county has gone an extra mile to support efforts that are being made globally to ensure social distancing and total isolation of covid-19 cases. This is one act that will go a long way in reducing cases of spreading the virus within hospital premises. This is not taking since we have cases of patients who are afraid of visiting hospitals because of rise in numbers of covid-19 cases.

Progress Made by the County in addressing the Pandemic as at 20th April, 2020:

1. Established protocols and rules of engagement depending on the levels of the infections and the rates of the sick.
2. Machakos Regional Public Health Laboratory was certified by KEMRI to test Covid-19 cases. County has capacity of testing up to four hundred (400) samples per day.
3. In collaboration with National Public Health Laboratory and National Influenza Centre, the county has embarked on training of health workers and trials for testing the virus.
4. Sensitized two thousand five hundred and twenty four (2524) Community Health Volunteers/Workers and one six hundred (1600) health workers on how to deal with the virus.
5. Has one hundred and twenty eight (128) people currently on quarantine.
6. Released One thousand and fifty six (1056) people who tested negative after successfully completing quarantine.
7. Has one (1) positive local case of Covid-19 at Mavoko. It's also worth noting that Machakos town and Mavoko sub-counties are at a higher risk due to its proximity to Nairobi with a population density of 609 and 386 persons per sq km respectively.

Counties planning to adopt a similar approach should consider the following:

1. Promote frequent hand hygiene measures in public places including bus stages, work places, markets etc. Hand hygiene includes either cleaning hands with soap and water or using a sanitizer.
2. Detect the disease early, diagnose and report early; trace all possible contacts and placing them under quarantine; and, treat the cases early.
3. Persuade people to stay at home, promote social distance and wear a mask when visiting public places such as markets, shops and supermarkets



