

FOREWORD

The World Health Organization (WHO) has recommended that all laboratory confirmed cases of COVID-19 be isolated and cared for in a health care facility. However, in situations where isolation of all cases in a health care facility is not possible, it emphasizes the prioritization of those with highest probability of poor outcomes, that is, patients with severe and critical illness and those with mild disease and risk for poor outcomes (age >60 years, cases with underlying co-morbidities, e.g., chronic cardiovascular disease, chronic respiratory disease, diabetes, cancer). WHO further recommends safe home-based isolation and care for patients with suspected COVID-19 who present with mild symptoms and on public health measures related to the management of their contacts.

In Kenya, the first confirmed case of COVID 19 was reported on 13th March 2020. Since then the country took stern measures to contain the spread. However, the spread of the disease surpassed the 2000 number of confirmed cases by the end of May 2020. Among them, 500 fully recovered and 64 died. This means that the country had over 1400 confirmed active cases by the end of the same period. When this number is added to the current non-COVID-19 sick patients in hospitals, the situation will begin to become overwhelming to the Health Care system. Current Kenya data reveals that 78% of the infected persons are asymptomatic or mildly symptomatic, and can be managed at home. In this regard, the guidelines for home-based isolation and care for patients with COVID-19 have been developed in response to the spiking numbers of infected persons in the recent past, and in anticipation of a surge in the COVID-19 cases. This approach dubbed, '**Jitenge System**' aims to ease the growing pressure of COVID-19 patients in hospitals and nationally due to increasing community transmission.

The Home-based isolation and care guidelines for COVID-19 patients cover key areas that include; Patients eligibility, assessment of feasibility, procedures, and referral system if progression of symptoms is noted, criteria for ending home-based isolation, community participation and monitoring among others. References for this guideline have been adopted from WHO and other countries but customized to the Kenyan context.

I urge all the stakeholders involved in the care of COVID-19 patients to adhere to this guideline and cascade the same to all informal caregivers of these patients in order to ensure delivery of quality services to our citizens.



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