

A REPORT ON FIELD ASSESSMENTS CONDUCTED AT MIGERA ISOLATION CENTER BY TRUCKERS' NATIONAL TASKFORCE ON THE 29TH/MAY/2020

Objective of the Assessment

- i. Fact finding on how the task force can support driver welfare at the Isolation center.**

Introduction:

The National Truckers Taskforce chose 3 of its members;

- i) DEO Kahiigwa who has 20 years' experience in truck driving, a master trainer for HGV and a consultant in the transport sector.
- ii) David Mwaka who is currently a reputable truck driver and a mechanic and experienced in carrying out road surveys and truck pushing.
- iii) David Musoke who is a Truck driver and also the wide experience in Human resource and driver welfare.

The above members were mandated to quickly run an independent survey to help in planning purposes through assessing one of the new Isolation Centers in Migera. The center is about 7.8Km after Migera Town from Kampala. The center has also been incorporated with the New Shell fuel station in Migera. The reports contain information gathered by the team on their visit to the Center and the observations were as follows;

Situation on the ground

The center is currently being heavily manned by a team of security personnel both from the Police and UPDF. There is also the presence of Ministry of Health officials operating from Shell petrol station in Migera. The team estimated a total number of 300 drivers at the center during the time of their visit. However, the team did not enter inside the center but had access to see, observe and hear what was taking place within the isolation center. This was due to strict security procedures.

Challenges Observed

- i) There is no information desk at the center to provide health risk information to the drivers before entry into the facility and exit out of the facility. Check In, check out (POB) were not observed since the center operates partially in shell premises.
- ii) Bathing facilities were not observed inside the center
- iii) Shell had a total of 6 toilets being used by the drivers in isolation which is ideally not adequate compared to the number of persons at the center.

- iv) There is not tent where drivers could sit outside their trucks considering the high temperatures in Nakasongola hence forcing the drivers to keep only in their cabins including sleeping at night.
- v) The only water system was at Shell and there was no running water within the isolation center which poses a serious health risk.
- vi) There are no urinals at the isolation center except the one at Shell which is being used by the drivers at the center.
- vii) The center has no better methods of passing key messages especially through loud speakers which is essential in passing educative information on Covid health risk, etc
- viii) There was no firefighting equipment at the isolation center to contain emergency fire outbreak since the center has various categories of trucks including fuel trucks.
- ix) The manner in which positive drivers were being picked and transferred posed a psychological problem among drivers since they didn't good counseling before being transferred to the hospital.
- x) There was minimum access to meals since we observed only one woman was cooking food outside the isolation center. Other basic things could only be accessed from Shell super market which would ideally be expensive for the drivers.
- xi) Waste management was not being observed in the isolation center since there were waste containers seen within the center.
- xii) No signs were observed in the isolation center (COVID 19 signs, no Smoking signs, etc)
- xiii) There was no road sign warning other road users to slow down since there are heavy trucks turning and ambulances out out at higher speed which could easily causes fatalities.

Recommendations

- i) We need to engage ministry of health and have a joint survey to see what areas we can be of support in relation to the above identified gaps.
- ii) The team should consider identifying and visiting another Isolation center to compare situations for better planning and decision making.
- iii) Every Isolation center need to have its own budget since the situations and gaps may differ and change time to time for each isolation center.
- iv) There is need to clearly identify the staffing need for deployment on the ground (Meals, Accommodation and transport)
- v) We need to move in so quickly to engage various partners and funders to manage the situations since they poses major health risk to the spread of COVID 19 among the drivers.
- vi) There is need for people working at the Isolation center to have reflector jackets for easy identification when visibility is poor.
- vii) Consideration should be given to counseling of drivers and passing affirmative information to drivers about COVID 19 frequently.
- viii) The team should consider a scheduled routine survey in order to monitor changing situations on the ground since they may change time to time.

Conclusion

The survey was successful considering that it was the first one though we foresee that situations are bound to change time to time within the Isolation centers especially when drivers are picked to be taken for treatment where trucks remain at the center which keeps accumulating on a daily basis depending on the number of drivers who have tested positive.

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