



COMMONWEALTH NURSES AND MIDWIVES FEDERATION

e-News Vol.14 Issue 11 November 2021

COMMONWEALTH COVID-19 VACCINE TRACKER

The Commonwealth Secretariat has established an online tracker for vaccination levels in Commonwealth countries:

(<https://www.thecommonwealth.io/vaccination-tracker/#/>).

The tracker shows the percentage of vaccinated and unvaccinated people in the Commonwealth as well as figures for individual countries. What becomes clearly apparent when you look at the figures is the marked disparity between Commonwealth countries.

The CNMF wants to ask the governments of Commonwealth countries why this disparity exists. Let me share with you some of the statements from the Commonwealth Charter agreed by all Commonwealth countries and signed by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II on Commonwealth Day 2013: (<https://thecommonwealth.org/sites/default/files/page/documents/CharteroftheCommonwealth.pdf>):

- ... the potential of and need for the Commonwealth – as a compelling force for good and as an effective network for co-operation and for promoting development – has never been greater;
- ... consulting and co-operating in the common interests of our peoples ... and influencing international society to the benefit of all;
- ... affirming that the Commonwealth way is ... through practical co-operation, and further affirming that the Commonwealth is uniquely placed to serve as a model.

The final statement from the Commonwealth Charter says:

- ... we are committed to ensuring that the Commonwealth is an effective association, responsive to members' needs, and capable of addressing the significant global challenges of the future.

The figures on page 2 below clearly demonstrate that the Commonwealth has not met the principles enshrined in its Charter in being '*responsive to member's needs*' and to be '*capable of addressing the significant global challenges of the future*'.

Where is the Commonwealth in being a role model for vaccine equity when some Commonwealth countries have managed to fully vaccinate a large proportion of their population (Singapore 86.3%; Malta 83.2%; Canada 74.8%; United Kingdom 67.2%; Australia 67.0% and New Zealand 64.4%) while other Commonwealth countries (Sierra Leone 3.1%; Zambia 3.0%; Malawi 2.9%; Ghana 2.6%; Tanzania 1.6%; Nigeria 1.5%; Papua New Guinea 1.2%; Uganda 0.9% and Cameroon 0.6%) have not? How do Commonwealth governments reconcile this outcome with the principles of the Commonwealth Charter?

The WHO set a target that 10% of each countries' population be fully vaccinated by the end of September 2021. The WHO note that 56 countries were not able to reach this target – most of them in Africa. According to the figures below, that figure includes fourteen Commonwealth countries. (<https://www.who.int/campaigns/vaccine-equity>).

The WHO further note that even more countries are at risk of missing the WHO targets of vaccinating 40% of their populations by the end of 2021 and 70% by the middle of 2022. The WHO advise there are sufficient doses of vaccines globally to drive down transmission and save lives if they go to the people who need them most around the world and that low vaccination rates in some countries is not a supply problem: it is an allocation problem. Equitable worldwide access to COVID-19 vaccines offers the best hope for slowing the coronavirus pandemic, saving lives, and securing a global economic recovery.

Commonwealth countries could have led the way in ensuring vaccine equity among and between all Commonwealth countries. They could have been a global role model demonstrating the power and relevance of a Commonwealth of Nations. They failed and are failing still with a 'my country first' attitude which sees some Commonwealth countries offering booster doses to their populations while other Commonwealth countries have not yet achieved 10% coverage.

Commonwealth governments have failed nurses and midwives also who have been at the forefront of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Decades of neglect in relation to educating sufficient nurses and midwives; ensuring safe workplaces; providing career pathways; and remuneration that reflects qualifications, skills and value. A disappointing outcome and a lost opportunity which has cost lives and trust.



COMMONWEALTH NURSES AND MIDWIVES FEDERATION

e-News Vol.14 Issue 11 November 2021

COMMONWEALTH COVID-19 VACCINE TRACKER

Percentage Commonwealth countries fully or partially vaccinated

<https://www.thecommonwealth.io/vaccination-tracker/#/>

8 November 2021

COUNTRY	%	COUNTRY	%
Singapore	86.3	India	24.5
Malta	83.2	Saint Lucia	23.1
Seychelles	77.5	South Africa	21.3
Malaysia	74.9	eSwatini	20.3
Canada	74.8	Pakistan	19.7
United Kingdom	67.2	Bangladesh	18.6
Mauritius	67.1	St Vincent and Grenadines	16.6
Australia	67.0	Lesotho	15.7
Nauru	66.7	Rwanda	15.5
Maldives	66.1	Jamaica	14.9
New Zealand	64.4	Botswana	12.8
Cyprus	63.8	Vanuatu	10.4
Sri Lanka	63.2	Namibia	10.3
Brunei Darussalam	63.1	Kiribati	9.3
Fiji	62.0	Gambia	8.9
Antigua and Barbuda	50.8	Mozambique	7.5
Tuvalu	49.3	Solomon Islands	4.4
Belize	48.6	Kenya	3.3
St Kitts and Nevis	45.8	Sierra Leone	3.1
Barbados	44.9	Zambia	3.0
Trinidad and Tobago	43.9	Malawi	2.9
Samoa	40.9	Ghana	2.6
Dominica	35.1	Tanzania	1.6
Tonga	34.8	Nigeria	1.5
Bahamas	32.3	Papua New Guinea	1.2
Guyana	31.6	Uganda	0.9
Grenada	27.8	Cameroon	0.6