NICD launches CoughWatchSA app for early detection of COVID-19 second wave

By **Robin-Leigh Chetty** - OCTOBER 28, 2020

In recent weeks there has been unsubstantiated murmurings that South Africa could be set for another hard lockdown, as fears rise over a potential wave of COVID-19 infections. While it remains to be seen if another lockdown is indeed on the cards, the National Institute for Communicable Diseases (NICD) is preparing to monitor the situation with the CoughWatchSA app.

The mobile app, available on Android and iOS for free download at the time of writing, will allow users to register and report their respiratory symptoms on a weekly basis.

"The aim of this platform is to identify and monitor acute respiratory tract infections (ARI) which may potentially include influenza, RSV and COVID19," noted the NICD in a statement about the app.

"South Africa may have reached its peak in the cumulative number of cases, but there may be a potential for a second wave of infections," it warns.

The Institute adds that CoughWatchSA will be run as a pilot for the remainder of this year and will be officially launched as a complementary surveillance platform thereafter.

It also notes that it is a a digital participatory surveillance platform, built upon user reporting, having worked effectively in regions like Europe, Australia and North America over the past decade.

"This platform is able to detect outbreaks for up to a week or two earlier than traditional surveillance platforms and has been shown to be a complementary disease surveillance platform to current facility-based disease surveillance," the NICD explains.

With there still being some aversion to track and trace apps aimed at tackling COVID-19 for some reason, we hope South Africans choose to download the CoughWatchDSA app in order to assist healthcare organisations do their jobs more easily.

[Image – Photo by engin akyurt on Unsplash]

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Robin-Leigh Chetty

When he's not reviewing the latest smartphones, Robin-Leigh is writing about everything tech-related from IoT and smart cities, to 5G and cloud computing. He's also a keen photographer and dabbles in console games.