

The Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf)
cordially invites you to its virtual

2021 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

- Date:** Wednesday, 20 October 2021
Time: 15:00 – 17:00
Venue: The Zoom joining link will be confirmed on registration
RSVP: [Click here](#) to RSVP by 18 October 2021. For more information contact renate@assaf.org.za



Prof Glenda Gray is an NRF A1 rated scientist, CEO and President of the South African Medical Research Council (SAMRC), She is a qualified pediatrician and co-founder of the internationally recognised Perinatal HIV Research Unit in Soweto, South Africa. Prior to her appointment at the SAMRC, she was the Executive Director of the Perinatal HIV Research Unit, an affiliate of Wits University.

The AGM Lecture will be presented by:

Prof Glenda Gray, President & CEO: SAMRC, MASSAf The COVID-19 pandemic – 18 months later

South Africa has had a devastating COVID-19 pandemic with more than 220 000 excess deaths reported since the onset of the pandemic in South Africa. The Public Health Response has seen a delicate balance between lives and livelihoods. It is expected that COVID-19 will become the leading cause of death in 2021, surpassing HIV. The economic impact of the pandemic, leading to job loss, increased household vulnerability and childhood hunger is expected to be long-lasting. The resilience of the health system has been tested and has had negative consequences for maternal health, childhood immunisations and chronic care. The national vaccine roll-out initially precarious due to limited supplies now faces challenges of inadequate coverage before year end. Inadequate therapeutic options have fuelled the investigation and use of medication such as Ivermectin. Conspiracy theories, anti-vaxer sentiments, and distrust of science and governments will impact the health response. Elections, vaccine mandates, and childhood vaccination will impact future waves. The roll of vaccine mandates as a public health response is expected to raise public debates and legal challenges. Vaccine passports may present an opportunity to re-open society as countries attempt to restore a sense of normalcy in a post-vaccine era of the COVID-19 pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic has challenged every aspect of society and the tragedy imposed by it will reverberate for a long time.