

## KZN HEALTH DEPARTMENT EXTREMELY CONCERNED BY ONGOING ATTACKS ON PARAMEDICS



**The KwaZulu-Natal Department of Health is extremely concerned by ongoing attacks on emergency services personnel.**

The attempted hijacking and armed robbery of a paramedics crew in Phoenix last night is the latest in a spate of similar violent incidents perpetrated against the Department's Emergency Medical Services staff, whose core responsibility is to save lives and restore hope to people in times of distress.

It is alleged that a two-person ambulance crew were held up at gunpoint by three men and robbed of their cellphones and other valuables, at about 8pm last

night. The paramedics had been responding to an emergency case involving an unconscious female patient, in Cardham Drive, Brookdale Phoenix.

They were trying to load the patient into the ambulance when they came under attack. It is alleged that upon realising that they were being robbed, the driver of the ambulance drove away to a nearby petrol station to request for SAPS assistance.

The ambulance driver went back to the scene to fetch his colleague. Both had sustained no injuries, but were traumatised from the incident. The patient was subsequently sent to a nearby clinic for further management.

Just last week, an ambulance crew was ambushed, shot and wounded while responding to a hoax call in the Amatikwe area of Inanda, north of Durban. Fortunately, both crew members escaped with their lives and are recovering. The very next day, another ambulance was robbed in Mayville the next day, with paramedics being relieved of their cellphones and wallets. Prior to that, another ambulance sustained considerable damage when it was stoned by an unknown person while responding to an emergency, also in the Inanda area.

The Department wishes to assure its Emergency Medical Services personnel, and the public at large, that it views these incidents in a

serious light, and is considering several strategies aimed at quelling these attacks. Regrettably, the Department is unable to divulge details of these security measures at this stage.

The Department wishes to reiterate, however, that co-operation between the public and SAPS remains the most effective and practical approach to winning the fight against this and other forms of crime. We therefore urge the public to come forward with any information about actual incidents or any plans by unscrupulous individuals to launch any attack on members of EMS.

The time has come for society to take a firm stand

against the persecution of EMS personnel and realise that any member of the public can need an ambulance at any given time. And that any interference with paramedics' ability to discharge their duties freely and safely is an affront not only to the State, but also to the public.



# HIV TREATMENT AND CARE: INFORMATION FOR HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS

**Antiretroviral therapy (ART) reduces HIV-related morbidity and mortality at all stages of HIV infection, and reduces HIV transmission. When taken consistently as prescribed, ART can suppress viral load, maintain high CD4 cell counts, prevent AIDS, prolong survival, and reduce risk of transmitting HIV to others, all of which are important treatment goals.**

Current treatment guidelines recommend ART for all people with HIV, regardless of CD4 cell count. ART should be started as soon as possible after diagnosis and should be accompanied by patient education regarding the benefits and risks of ART and the importance of adherence.

## Regular, Ongoing Care

Keeping patients in regular, ongoing care improves their health and reduces their risk of HIV transmission. The benefits of on-going care can include addressing and supporting ART adherence, maintaining decreased viral load and increased CD4 count, lower rates of progression to AIDS, decreased rates of hospitalization, and improved overall health.

Poor retention is more common in people who have substance use disorders,

serious mental health problems, unmet socio-economic needs (e.g., housing, food, or transportation), limited financial resources, or schedules that may make adherence difficult.

There are several effective approaches to help patients stay in HIV care, improve medication adherence, achieve viral suppression, and improve health outcomes. These include providing retention and re-engagement support for out-of-care persons or patients at risk of falling out of care (e.g., missed a care visit, experiencing barriers to care engagement)

## Patient-Provider Relationship

Studies have found that low trust in providers and poor patient-provider relationships have been associated with lower retention in care and lower satisfaction with the clinic experience. These findings underscore the need to build supportive relationships with patients that improve their health outcomes. Here are some ways health care providers and their practices can achieve this:

**Help patients modify behaviours that lead to poor retention in HIV care**

It is important to communicate with the patient non-judgmentally to learn what they know about the importance of retention. Identify skills that the patient might lack to remain in care, such as problem-solving skills. Guide the patient to identify possible changes that would eliminate or reduce the barriers they face. You can also congratulate the patient when they are able to lessen the barriers. Strategize with the patient to identify new goals and healthy behaviours. And actively refer patients to relevant support services (e.g. mental health support services) as needed to provide additional support for retention.

**Foster patient trust** - Be direct, non-judgmental, and supportive. Use open-ended questions to involve the patient in decision-making regarding their HIV treatment and overall care. And include simple, basic actions during patient encounters to foster communication, such as asking how a patient prefers to be addressed.

**Allow open communication and collaborative decision making** - Educate patients about their options and ask what

questions come to mind when considering those options in order to encourage informed conversation as part of the decision-making process. Encourage discussions on subjects about substance use, sexual behaviour, and mental health. And provide referrals when appropriate, and assess patient willingness to complete the referral.

**Demonstrate interest in addressing barriers to care, including structural barriers, from the first interaction** - When possible, extend office hours or offer more flexible appointment times one or more days per week (e.g., offer some walk-in or same-day appointments). Maintain accurate patient contact information and update it at every visit.

Use patient-tracking systems to determine whether a patient has dropped out of care; contact patients promptly to reschedule missed appointments. Help patients find resources to address unmet needs and barriers to care. When possible, connect patients with childcare, transportation, or other services and offer collocation of primary care and social services. When warranted, encourage

patients to access help with substance use or mental health services. Encourage patients to identify friends and family who can help with encouragement, support, and attend medical appointments with them.

Staying in care can be challenging, even for the most motivated patients, and their needs may change over time.

Clearly, talking with patients at each visit allows health care providers to reinforce positive behaviours, uncover barriers to successful long-term treatment, and facilitate access to services and resources as needs change over time.

Positive reinforcement can help patients maintain high levels of adherence to care appointments and HIV treatment. This technique to foster adherence includes informing patients of their low or suppressed viral load and increases in CD4 count. Use repeated brief discussions to help patients identify and deal with potential adherence problems that will support engagement in care and viral suppression and establish a trusting patient-provider relationship.

## THE IMMUNE SYSTEM: WHY ALCOHOL IS BAD FOR YOUR ARV TREATMENT

**We often take lightly of how our bodies are quick to heal, or how they overcome the flu. We heal quicker and better and are far more energetic when our health is at an optimal level. We owe all of our seemingly small health victories to our genetic warrior, the immune system.**

The immune system is made up of special organs, cells and chemicals that fight infection (microbes). The main parts of the immune system are: white blood cells, antibodies, the complement system, the lymphatic system, the spleen, the thymus, and the bone marrow. These are the parts of your immune system that actively fight infection.

Healthy ways to strengthen your immune system:

According to the Harvard Medical School; your first line of defence is to choose a healthy lifestyle. Following general good-health

guidelines is the single best step you can take towards naturally keeping your immune system strong and healthy.

**Every part of your body, including your immune system, functions better when protected from environmental assaults and bolstered by healthy-living strategies such as these:**

- Abstaining from smoking.
- Having a diet high in fruits and vegetables.
- Exercising regularly.
- Maintaining a healthy weight.
- Abstaining is the goal but should you drink alcohol, drink only in moderation
- Getting adequate sleep.
- Taking steps to avoid infection, such as washing your hands frequently and cooking meats thoroughly.
- Minimising stress.

### The Immune System and alcohol:

Drinking too much can weaken an individual's immune system, making their body a much easier target for ailments. People who drink excessively are at higher risk to contract diseases such as pneumonia and tuberculosis than those who do not drink too much. Drinking a lot on a single occasion slows your body's ability to ward off infections – even up to 24 hours after getting drunk. Alcohol also impairs judgement, and may lead to dangerous and irrational decisions such as having unprotected sex, increasing the chances of HIV infection.

### “I am on ART but still have drinking habits – what then?”

While mixing alcohol with anti-retroviral treatment is discouraged, one study in the Journal of General Internal Medicine showed that nearly half of all

HIV-positive people have reported skipping or stopping their meds while drinking, which ultimately had an effect on their T-cell count and viral suppression.

What is more alarming is that even moderate alcohol consumption can be risky. In fact, according to another study published in Drug and Alcohol Dependence, moderate alcohol consumption may be more harmful to people living with HIV. Risk factors for people who drink alcohol include a weakened immune system which thus becomes unable to effectively fight HIV.

Additionally, alcohol has a major effect on the liver. For HIV-positive people who also have hepatitis B or C, even small amounts of alcohol can speed up liver damage. It can also increase one's cholesterol levels, which are already at high risk of increasing while on ARVs.

ART is a lifelong treatment that can keep a person

healthy for many years and greatly reduce their chances of transmitting HIV to their partner(s) if taken consistently and correctly. Treatment is most likely to be successful when an individual knows what to expect and is committed to following the plan as agreed to by their healthcare provider.

**Once you start treatment you need to live a healthy life. This means;**

- Healthy eating habits
- Reducing alcohol intake or stopping altogether
- Refraining from illicit drug usage
- Using a condom regularly and consistently
- Exercising regularly; and
- Sticking to one sex partner.

So, the million dollar question is; “How much does your health mean to you?”

Instant pleasure might not be so clever. Choose you; test and treat, live a healthy lifestyle and adhere.



# YOUTH MONTH: WHAT WAS SAID AND HEARD



**As we wrap up Youth Month, Health Chat brings you a selection of quotable quotes from top leaders from around the country, on youth and health matters.**

*"The fact that the unemployment rate among young South Africans is more than 50% is a national crisis that demands urgent, innovative and coordinated solutions. And because more young people are entering the labour force every year, the economy needs to create far more jobs for youth than it currently does, merely to keep the youth unemployment rate steady."*  
**- President Cyril Ramaphosa, when delivering The State of the Nation Address, 21 June 2019**

*"The current mechanism strategies that we have are keeping the infection at bay, but it's not going to be enough to turn the tide. We need innovation in diagnostics, new drugs, and preventing HIV"*  
**- SANAC Chairperson, Deputy President David Mabuza, wrapping-up the SA National AIDS Conference held in Durban, Inkosi Albert Luthuli on the 17th June 2019.**

*"We salute the youth of*

*1976 and all young people who fought against the evils of oppression and we thank those that paid the ultimate price that they paid for our freedom.*

*Unfortunately, since then too many young people have succumbed to a preventable disease – HIV and AIDS! Every year for the past 9 years, South Africans gather here in the ICC to discuss ways to prevent HIV transmission as well as how to ensure that we initiate and keep people who are living with HIV on treatment.*

*Lest we forget, we have an estimated 7.1 million South Africans who are HIV positive with 4.6 million on treatment. This means that we must move rapidly to ensure that everyone living with HIV is on treatment. Equally we must ensure that those of us who are HIV negative remain negative! This needs innovation and change... Let me be clear as the newly appointed Minister of Health, stigma and discrimination has no place in the provision of health services. We will take action against any health professional that discriminates against anyone on the basis of their illness, gender orientation, social*

*status or any other characteristic!"*  
**- Minister of Health, Dr Zweli Mkhize, when opening the 9th South African AIDS Conference, 15 June 2019**

*"Our message to the youth of South Africa is clear and simple. The future of the country belongs to them, and it is upon them to make our future bright and successful.*

*"We have to work together to address the high level of unemployment, and to do that we must address the challenges of skills, and the education system. We encourage all young people to take up education seriously, and to ensure that they prioritise skills that are relevant to the economy of our country. The first problem that is ruining the life of the youth is the whole issue of drugs, and substance abuse. We believe that young people must prioritise themselves. They must look after themselves. They must not think that short-term entertainment is the solution. But they must focus on uplifting their lives, and ensure that they become prosperous.*

*"The issue of teenage pregnancy is affecting us in*

*many communities. It is because of that that we encourage young people to abstain, but also those who are engaged in sexual activities, if they do so, let them protect themselves through the use of condoms. For us the clear message is abstinence. And that is the message that we are sending to all young people of our province."*  
**- KZN Honourable Premier, Mr Sihle Zikalala in Dundee, on Youth Day, 16 June 2019**

*"Young women are mostly affected and infected at a very high rate. We consider that to be as a result of intergenerational relationships that most of them get into. We have had programmes that we are running as the province that relate to that. Obviously, it means they are not as effective as we thought. We then have to go back to the drawing board and redo them. They are quite a number of other things we are going to strengthen the fight against the spread of HIV and AIDS. The issue of medical male circumcision is among the programmes that we will strengthen because it has contributed*

*to the decline in HIV/Aids prevalence."*  
**- KZN Health MEC Nomagugu Simelane-Zulu at the 9th South African AIDS Conference in Durban.**

*"I was a studious learner since I was in high school, with a passion for health. I applied to university, and I was fortunate to be accepted at UKZN Westville Campus. However, while studying towards my Bachelor of Science degree, my parents became incapable of paying for my fees. As luck would have it, the Government opened up an opportunity for me to study in Cuba. I applied like everyone else and was selected. I have since worked at several hospitals, such as Ngwelezane, Queen Nandi, and Itshelajuba. I am currently the medical manager at Dundee Hospital. I urge young people to grab the opportunities that are available to them. The government is here to help, but you must also get up and do your part. I am living testimony to that."*  
**- Cuba-trained Dr Pamela Dlamini, Medical Manager at Dundee Hospital 16 June 2019**





# KZN HEALTH MEC SENDS CONDOLENCES TO UMPHUMULO HOSPITAL PATIENT WHO COMMITTED SUICIDE



KZN Health MEC Ms Nomagugu Simelane has sent her deepest condolences to the family of a 42 year-old man who committed suicide at Umphumulo Hospital, at Ilembe District, on Thursday afternoon. The body of Mr Mhlabanzima Khambule was found hanging from an electric extension cord which was tied to a water pipe, in the hospital's bathroom.

According to nursing staff, there had been nothing suspicious about the patient.

It is alleged that at 15h46, a male staff nurse noticed that the sluice room door was locked and that the patient was not in bed. After knocking and getting no response, the nurse was informed by other patients that Mr Khambule was seen going to the bathroom and had not returned. The male nurse summoned the help of one of his colleagues, and they went to look for the patient through the back window. When they saw the patient hanging, they then rushed and forcefully

opened the locked sluice room door. They immediately called the male ward Operational Manager, who inspected the patient and noticed that he was still warm to touch, although he was unresponsive and not breathing. The patient was placed on the floor for resuscitation. A community medical officer was also called from the casualty unit and resuscitation was commenced. Unfortunately, the patient had no signs of life. He had no pulse, no heart

sounds and no respiratory effort, and was certified dead at 15h55. The incident was reported to the police, and the body was removed to the mortuary, where a post mortem was due to be conducted.

MEC Simelane-Zulu said: "As a Department, we are saddened by this unfortunate and unnatural loss of the life of a patient within one of our facilities. At this stage, we believe that the patient committed suicide, which is most unfortunate because the

disease that he was suffering from is quite a common one, and it is curable if you adhere to treatment.

"May his soul rest in peace. We also send our deepest condolences to his family, and wish them strength at this difficult time."

recovery.





# EXERCISE: A FREE AND HEALTHY “HAPPY PILL”



**Although regular exercise is largely known to lower the risk of developing communicable diseases such as diabetes, heart disease, stroke and more, did you know that it is also good for your mental health?**

On Wednesday (26 June 2019), the world observed International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Drug Trafficking.

Unfortunately, certain hard drugs – which are ultimately toxic for human health - are also known to induce a sense of euphoria on those who take them. However, aside from being illegal, these drugs are notoriously addictive and destructive for the body and the relationships of addicted persons.

Research proves that exercising increases the level of endorphins released into the brain and

nervous system. Endorphins are hormones that create a feeling of happiness, excitement and calmness. Therefore, if it's the euphoric thrill that you're seeking, exercise is your safer, healthier answer.

## BENEFITS OF EXERCISE

**Individuals who are more active:**

- 1. Are likely to have less risk of a hip or vertebral fracture;**
- 2. Exhibit a higher level of cardiorespiratory and muscular fitness; and**
- 3. Are more likely to achieve weight maintenance, have a healthier body mass and composition.**

-WHO



# HEALTH INVENTIONS THAT CHANGED THE WORLD: THE CONDOM



In the year 1839 Charles Goodyear invented one of the simplest but greatest inventions: the rubber condom.

Previously, condoms had been made of various materials such as the intestines and bladders of lambs and other animals. In the year 1855 major rubber companies began to mass-produce this great

invention. 180 years later, condoms remain the best method of birth control as well as a protective measure against HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

Condom promotion and distribution is one of the KZN Department of Health's key initiatives in fighting the scourge of HIV/AIDS and STIs. The Department

continues to value and continues to protect the lives of the people of KwaZulu-Natal by making male and female condoms easily accessible and free of charge.



# ETHICS TALK

## CODE OF CONDUCT: PERFORMANCE OF DUTIES

**There are expectations of how Public Servants perform their duties especially as to how the performance of our duties impacts on service delivery, the image of the Public Sector as a whole and the image of the Department we are serving.**

A Public Service employee should strive to achieve the objectives of his/her institution cost-effectively and in the public's interest.

In your day-to-day functioning, you should continually ask yourself whether what you are doing really contributes to delivering the services and results for which your component is responsible.

This requires all employees to have a thorough knowledge of the goals and objectives of their components, their Institution and the Department.

A Public Service employee is creative in thought and in the execution of his/her duties, seeks innovative ways to solve problems and enhances effectiveness and efficiency within the context of the law.

You should be fully involved in performing your duties and apply your mind constantly to the work at hand. Always seek to do your work efficiently and better in order to deliver better results and services.

During the course of a normal work day, numerous problems and/or challenges can occur and you should continually seek to overcome these problems and/or challenges in the quickest and best possible manner.

*EXAMPLE: If an employee notices that clients/public have to stand in queues for a long time, he/she should think of innovative ways of solving the problem in order to make the services more convenient and accessible for the public/client.*

A Public Service employee is punctual in the execution of his/or duties.

As Public Servants we need to realize that our official responsibilities are very important and we should carry out our duties with undivided attention, time and energy.

We need to strive to be self-motivated and self-directed, faithfully doing our work in accordance with the laid down Policies and procedures without someone else having to request or remind us to do so.

*EXAMPLE: An employee arrives late for work and is tired as a result from a late night party and is not able to do his/her work properly. He/she is guilty of being irresponsible and wasting public money.*

A Public Service employee executes his/her duties in a professional and competent manner.

You should continually ask yourself whether you are truly satisfied with your work and whether you would be satisfied if you were in the shoes of the public receiving the end product of your work.

Employees should ask themselves whether they are treating others (colleagues, supervisors and the public) in a manner that respects their human dignity and legitimate rights and whether they are displaying a knowledgeable, pleasant, helpful and efficient attitude.

*EXAMPLE: Sometimes an employee rendering a frontline service has to deal with a person who appears to have difficulty in understanding why certain things have to be done in a certain way. The employee should not react emotionally but should calmly explain the reasons.*

A Public Service employee does not engage in any transaction or action that is in conflict with or infringes on the execution of his/her official duties.

In order to bring about and maintain trust in the Public Service, we all are expected to serve in a loyal and dedicated manner. This requires us to not get involved, either on or off duty, in matters/activities that could:

- Be regarded as being fraud or theft;
- Interfere with the carrying out of official duties;
- Influence the way in which our work is conducted;
- Influence our objectivity in making decisions;
- Create embarrassment for the State as the employer; or
- Be perceived to potentially prejudice or favour certain parties.

A Public Servant's behavior on and off duty should be such that the Government of the day and members of the public will trust them to loyally do their work with the only objective being the best interests of the community.

A Public Service employee will recuse himself/herself from any official action or decision-making process which may result in improper personal gain and this should be properly declared by the employee.

Whenever you feel that you cannot be objective in performing your work or making a decision or when other people may have reason to believe that you are not able to remain objective then you should immediately withdraw from such activities in order to protect the fair, honest and trustworthy image of the Public Service.

A Public Service employee is honest and accountable in dealing with the public funds and uses the public service's property and other resources effectively, efficiently and only

for authorized official purposes.

The general public trusts Public Servants with the assets, property and funds of the State and expects all public servants to handle these in a responsible, honest and ethical manner.

A Public Service employee promotes sound, efficient, effective, transparent and accountable administration.

The promotion of sound, efficient, transparent and accountable administration implies that every citizen should have equal access to efficient, helpful and friendly service, irrespective of his/her status, gender and race.

In rendering sound, efficient and accountable administrative services, the basic values and principles of the Constitution must always be kept in mind.

A Public Service employee in the course of his/her official duties, shall report to the appropriate authorities any fraud, corruption, nepotism, maladministration and any other act which constitutes an offence or which is prejudicial to the Public Interest.

Corruption refers to widespread moral deterioration especially bribery and fraud. It often goes hand in hand with other criminal practices which may threaten a legitimate economy. It is a factor of social disintegration and is extremely harmful to any community and is always underpinned by a "get rich quick" social ethos.

It also undermines the legitimacy of a political system by destroying trust and confidence and when an administration loses its credibility a climate for instability is created. Corruption eats away at the

very fabric of public trust and confidence. Corrupt practices are often fed by a lack of work ethic, absence of accountability and responsibility.

It is your duty to report any illegal actions, dishonest behavior or corrupt practices to the relevant authorities as soon as you become aware of them.

**You can report unethical behaviour, fraud and corruption to the following:**

**Whistle Blowing Hotline (PHOC)**  
**0800 005 133**

**DoH Ethics Office**  
**033 395 2281**

**Provincial Whistle Blowing Hotline**  
**0800 596 596**

**Public Service National Anti-Corruption and Ethics Hotline (NACH)**  
**0800 701 701**





# PREMIER SETS THE TONE FOR 6TH ADMINISTRATION

## HEALTH HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE STATE OF THE PROVINCE ADDRESS



**The Premier, Mr Sihle Zikalala, delivered the first State of the Province Address since the new administration under the theme “Breaking the grimy restraints for a united, healthy, safe and prosperous KwaZulu-Natal”.**

These are some of the key points he shared in his speech:

- We will strengthen the Campaign on Accelerated Reduction of Maternal and Child Mortality and regular progress reports will be tabled in the meetings of Provincial Council on Aids.
- We will alleviate patient-waiting times by strengthening the Centralised Chronic Medicines Dispensing and Distribution (CCMDD) programme, while accelerating the training and involvement of Community Care-Givers. These care-givers are working with Primary Health Care Clinic nurses in distributing chronic care medication packaged in hospitals.
- One of the milestones in Health Infrastructure Development will be the commissioning of the brand-new 500-bed Dr Pixley ka Isaka Seme Memorial Hospital in Bridge City, KwaMashu, North of Durban. This is the first regional hospital to be built in KZN and is wholly funded by Government, post 1994.
- The new Dr Pixley Ka Isaka Seme Memorial Hospital will have a basic Patient Electronic Record system, where the

Department has signed a memorandum of agreement with the Department of Health from the Eastern Cape for the use of their system which is fully developed and owned by Government. We are convinced that this will help secure patient records, reduce patient waiting times, and significantly improve overall client experience at our facilities.

- As part of implementing Radical Economic Transformation, as the provincial government we have adopted Operation Vula Programme, we have identified some commodities which are more procured by government and put them as set-aside to be sourced from SMMEs and cooperatives. These commodities include Agricultural produces coordinated through RASET, furniture manufacturing, detergents, clothing and textile especially for uniforms of government employees and protective clothes, building material, Pulp and Paper which produce toilet papers.
- Among challenges that cripples SMMEs and hinders the success of economic transformation programme is the failure of government to pay on time. We are consolidating the approach to stop the bad and sometimes corrupt practice. As part of this approach Treasury is also implementing an Electronic Invoice Tracking Tools in Provincial Departments to monitor and fast-track payment of pay-on-time suppliers.





**health**

Department:  
Health  
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

**COMPILED BY:**

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