



PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL  
**CORPORATE COMMUNICATION SERVICES**

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**TO: ALL MEDIA**

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**EMBARGO: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **IMMUNISATION RELATED DEATH**

The Maternal Child and Women's Health Programme in the Provincial Department of Health deems any kind of Adverse Event following immunisation in a very serious light. This follows a recent incident where a six-week old baby died after she was immunised at a clinic in Phoenix, Durban.

Adverse events include abscesses, continuous crying, severe temperatures, or anything that parents or medical practitioners suspect have been caused by immunisation.

Any death that occurs within 48 hours of immunisation is investigated as an Adverse Event Following Immunisation, and seen as extremely serious.

District and Provincial Officials undertake a full investigation within 72 hours of the report of occurrence.

The prescribed WHO and SA National Health steps of investigation are undertaken which includes:

- Assessment of the storage conditions of the vaccine. Actual vaccine vials used are withdrawn for possible laboratory investigation.
- Visits to neighbouring health facilities to look for other reported cases, which were immunisation at the same facility or with the same batch number of vaccine.



- Vaccines of the same batch are withdrawn from the services, if there is any suspicion that the event could have been related to the vaccine.
- Assessment of the medical records of the case, to exclude other reasons for the death/or serious illness.
- Evaluation by external assessors of the immunisation practice at the facility.
- Visit to the family to obtain a history of a child's death health and to assure them that the investigation is being undertaken.
- If possible and acceptable, permission for a post-mortem is requested from the family.

The province of KwaZulu-Natal has a committee consisting of a pediatrician, pharmacist, a nurse practitioner and the Expanded programme of Immunisation manager as core members. This committee examines all aspects of the case and makes a preliminary decision about the cause of the Adverse Event Following Immunisation. This committee also makes recommendations regarding any intervention required at service and Provincial level.

All reports and full documentation is sent to National Health Department for final classification. Recommendations are made regarding necessary interventions to be taken. The information of all Adverse Events Following Immunisation is also shared with WHO officials at National level.

All hospitals and clinics in KwaZulu-Natal are aware of the steps to be followed in the investigation. The Public is assured that all cases are investigated to assure safe delivery of vaccines to each child.

**ENDS**

**For more information please contact Mrs Janet Dalton on  
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