



HEALTH

KwaZulu-Natal

CORPORATE COMMUNICATION

Natalia, 330 Langalibalele Street, Pietermaritzburg, 3201
Private Bag X 9051, Pietermaritzburg, 3200
Tel.: 033- 395 2220, Fax.: 033-845 0141 or 033 342 0429
Email.:mbali.thusi@kznhealth.gov.za
www.kznhealth.gov.za

TO: ALL MEDIA

DATE: 19 OCTOBER 2006

EMBERGO: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NO POSITIVE POLIO CASE IN KWAZULU-NATAL

IMPORTANT NOTICE: THE CHILD HAD CHICKEN POX AND HIGH FEVER NOT SMALLPOX AND HAYFEVER AS STATED IN PREVIOUS STATEMENT

The Provincial Department of Health is disputing reports that an 18-month-old baby from Umkomaas on the KwaZulu-Natal south coast has contracted the poliovirus. The KZN Department of Health this morning sent two representatives from the Maternal, Child and Women's Health Unit to the family of the 18-month-old baby. The team included Ms. Janet Dalton and Ms. Zanele Hadebe.

This follows comment made by Ms. Webster, CEO of Post Polio Network on SAFM this morning, which suggested that an 18-month-old baby had contracted the poliovirus. The mother of the baby in question informed Ms. Hadebe and Ms. Dalton that the baby developed chicken pox and high fever a day after the polio vaccine was administered. She further went on to say that she was concerned that her child could have contracted the poliovirus after she read an article by Ms. Webster, which cautioned parents about risks of administering polio vaccines to babies and children.

The article was published in, the Rising Sun October 17-23 2006. Below is an extract from the article:

"The Department of Health is requesting that parents have their children immunised once more as an extra precaution against polio. It is important that parents know that if a child has a cut, boil, open wound, etc that they must not have that child immunised. We use the OPV which is the vaccine and if you allow your child an immunisation under these conditions then it is possible it could get polio"...

The baby was immunised against polio during the recent polio immunisation campaign, which the department had embarked on last week, "The mother of the baby took the baby to a doctor who examined the baby and the baby was given a clean bill of health. We are very concerned as the department when we have people

in senior positions like Ms. Webster who mislead the public about something this serious,” says Mr. Leon Mbangwa, spokesperson for the KZN Department of Health.

“The recent polio immunisation campaign was very successful as more than 84 % of children below the age of 5 were immunised against polio. Members of the public should not allow themselves to be misinformed they should always seek information from their nearest clinic or hospital if they are in doubt”, added Mbangwa.

ENDS

For more information please contact Leon Mbangwa on 083 459 8695