

TO: ALL MEDIA
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Today, the MEC for Health, Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo, wished motorists and holiday makers a healthy and safe holiday season during the health tips distribution at the Mariannhill Toll plaza by the MEC and the department's emergency personnel this morning.

"Over the holidays there is greater emphasis on the number of people who have died and accidents that occurred, however this masks a sad picture of hundreds more who are hospitalised and those who loose limbs as a result of accidents as well as violent and traumatic episodes," said the MEC at the Toll Plaza.

South African faces a quadruple burden of disease. This is as a result of HIV, AIDS and TB, maternal and infant mortality, chronic diseases and violent and traumatic incidents. The incidence of violence and trauma impacts negatively on health care delivery. This takes away resources (both human and financial) away from other services such as maternity and medical care. Whereas the department spends around R800 per person per day in a hospital, it spends around R10 000 for victims of trauma and violence who require intensive care.

"For every death, it is estimated that there are dozens of hospitalizations, hundreds of emergency department visits and thousands of doctors' appointments," Dr Dhlomo continues. "We are here to showcase our state of readiness by showing our ambulance services that are ready to provide high-quality emergency care to victims of all types of trauma. We are also committed to the improvement of our emergency response and the ability of to treat and rehabilitate victims."

The department's intention was to highlight that for every person dying as a result of injury, there are hundreds more that sustain non-fatal injuries and other health consequences. The MEC also said that although the ultimate goal must be to prevent injuries and accidents from happening in the first place, much can be done to minimize the disability and ill-health arising from the injuries that do occur despite the best prevention efforts.

The department is ready to provide quality support and care services to victims. The MEC also called on the public to ensure that; (i) they avoid alcohol and illicit drugs, (ii) prevent violence against women and children, (iii) people ensure that they get tested for HIV and Tuberculosis (TB) and thereby adopting a healthy lifestyle, and (iv) most importantly, in case of emergency dial 10177 as emergency personnel are ready.

The department of health will be providing appropriate services for victims of non-fatal injuries in order to prevent future fatalities, reduce the amount of short-term and long-term disability, and help those affected to cope with the impact of the injury event on their lives.

ENDS

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