

Miraculous baby rescue: MEC Dhlomo says baby abandonment is a sign that programmes promoting contraceptives, condoms needs to be strengthened

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KZN Health MEC Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo says more aggressive promotion of family planning methods like contraceptives and condoms is needed in order to prevent the abandonment of babies and illegal termination of pregnancy.

The MEC was reacting to the shock discovery of a newborn baby who was miraculously rescued alive from inside a storm water drain in Newlands East, Durban, this morning.

The little girl was heard crying by a passer-by near the intersection of Barracuda Rd and Herring Circle, who then alerted emergency medical services and the SAPS.

Paramedics, including those from the KZN Department of Health's Emergency Medical Services, worked flat-out this morning to rescue the little girl, who was found with her umbilical chord intact.

She is believed to be aged between one and three days, and was named Sibanisethu (Our ray of light), and Gabriella, by local residents gathered at the scene where she was discovered.

After a rescue operation that lasted nearly four hours, the little girl was eventually extricated from the drain by paramedics and airlifted to Inkosi Albert Luthuli Hospital (IALCH).

IALCH trauma specialist Dr Timothy Hardcastle said the baby had had to be warmed up due to her exposure to cold temperature while inside the drain, and that apart from minor scratches on her chest and the dirt on her body, she was in a satisfactory condition.

She is due to be referred to another Durban Hospital, and will later be released into the care of the KZN Department of Social Development.

MEC Dhlomo, who visited the baby, thanked the whistle blower who found the baby, the paramedics, paediatrics, Dr Hardcastle, and everyone else who was involved in the rescue operation.

"It's really a miracle that this baby was saved. The doctors have given this baby a clean bill of health, and she will be transferred to another hospital."

The MEC said the incident should be a turning point regarding the promotion family planning by government, and its embracement by society.



"It's a wake-up call that talks to our programmes of family planning, because the birth of this little one is as a result of an unplanned and unwanted pregnancy, resulting in the mother deciding to throw her baby into a storm water drain. It's something that we need to do... to strengthen our family planning "But again, if you've missed your opportunity for family planning and it was not successful, still do come into our hospitals. We'll advise and put you in touch with social workers who can help with the adoption process if the pregnancy was unplanned. It doesn't have to end this way. This little one was very fortunate to be alive and well. Some of the babies who get abandoned do not come out alive. So, this points out to the need to strengthen family planning in that community, and others as well."