



# IMPILO ENGCONO

# NEWS

Information for better health ...

MAY-JUNE 2022

## NATIONAL GLOBAL VAX LAUNCHED TO ASSIST WITH AVAILABILITY OF COVID-19 VACCINES

The COVID-19 pandemic is still a problem regarding the health systems and economies of many countries, especially developing countries. For this reason, the United States of America has committed to making COVID-19 vaccines available in struggling countries that may have problems procuring them. On 3 June 2022 at Caluza Sports Grounds in uMgungundlovu District; the National Minister for Health Dr. Joe Phahla together with delegates from USA and USAID were present to sign a National Memorandum of Understanding regarding vaccine donations to South Africa and discuss how the country can improve vaccine access to the general public



The team led by the KZZN Health MEC Ms Nomagugu Simelane visited health provision stalls and service areas where the public was accessing different types of free services including eye screening, chest Xrays, Covid-19 vaccination, HIV & TB screening, dental services, medical male circumcision etc

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High school students from the Mkhambathini Sub District were reminded that they have an important role in the fight against the spread of HIV



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District Management team said goodbye to 3 Cuban doctors who were instrumental in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic



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## UMGUNGUNDLOVU HOSTS THE NATIONAL GLOBAL VAX CAMPAIGN, A PARTNERSHIP INITIATIVE TO INCREASE COVID-19 VACCINE ACCESS

Various countries are in desperate need to defeat the COVID-19 pandemic and this means that global partnerships are a requirement. The United States of America government is also committed to overcoming the COVID-19 pandemic, both at home and abroad, and has been influential in the global response to fight the virus by responding to the need for COVID-19 vaccines in many countries. The United States and other donors have made efforts to help low and middle-income countries efficiently receive, distribute, and administer doses.

On 3 June 2022 at Caluza Sports Grounds in uMgungundlovu District; the National Minister for Health Dr. Joe Phahla together with delegates from the USAID and United States hosted a Global VAX event to launch this initiative for South Africa. The United States has already donated over half a billion COVID-19 vaccines, all free of charge, to more than 115 countries in every region of the world—more doses than any other nation. This partnership with South Africa will prioritise and make vaccines easily available.

Other dignitaries present at the event were Deputy Minister for Health, Dr. Sibongiseni Dhlomo; KZN MEC for Health Ms. Nomagugu Simelane; Mayor of the District Municipality, Councillor Mzi Zuma; US Embassy Charge d' Affairs, Ms. Heather Merritt; Other Representatives of the US Development Agencies. The vaccine uptake in South Africa has slowed down and the demand for COVID-19 vaccine and the spread of anti-vaccine messages especially on social media have harmed public demand.

The scientific conclusion existing today still confirms the efficacy and safety of the vaccine and that vaccines help in reducing the chances of getting sick and dying when you get infected. On the date of the event, it was announced that South Africa had already administered over 36 million doses. 70% of people over the age of 60 years have received at least one dose. Younger people are not vaccinated in huge numbers.



Minister of Health Dr Joe Phahla thanked the USA and related organisations delegates for the donations made and encouraged the public to utilize the available COVID-19 vaccine sites and encourage others to get vaccinated as it will reduce their chances of getting sick and dying if they get infected with the virus

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# HIGH SCHOLARS ENCOURAGED TO DO EVERYTHING IN THEIR POWERS TO AVOID GETTING INFECTED WITH HIV

My life, my future—my education comes first, my future is in my hands, it is in my hands, I pass my subjects with flying colours, baby not now” was a motto that was read out to high scholars who attended an event to address the spread of HIV and developments to fight it. On 18 May 2022, gathered at the hall were Grade 10, 11 & 12 students from 4 local high schools namely Ngangezwe, Banqobile, Nobhala, and iNhlanhla Yabebhuzi. Mrs. Zanele Ntombela, Programme Manager for the HAST programme mentioned that the district is facing challenges when it comes to HIV/AIDS, despite the availability of

ARV medication for those who are HIV positive. This is despite the provision of PREP to prevent getting HIV for those who are HIV negative, the health awareness programmes, the provision of free condoms, despite the availability of Medical Male Circumcision programmes. “We all need to do more as a society, we all have an important part to play in the fight against HIV,” said Mrs. Ntombela.

Dr. Madlala and Dr. Mkhwanazi from UKZN mentioned to the students that young people needed to do research-related courses to help fight HIV as the research findings pave a path for the government and other

organisations on what actions to take in fighting the virus. Dr. Madlala further said medical research as a career path has many employment opportunities, more students should be interested in it, and bursaries are also available. Currently, there is a process toward HIV vaccine development. There have been many developments and trials that have taken place in the development of the vaccine but still, none have been approved, but the developments are promising” said Dr. Nompumelelo Mkhwanazi. Students accessed different free health services like HIV testing, COVID-19 Vaccination, TB, eye and dental screening, etc



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**Pic1:** Dr Zulu, District Director uMgungundlovu Health encouraging the students to practice healthy lifestyles and responsible behaviour. She also discouraged unplanned pregnancies , sugar-daddy relationships and school-drop outs. She encouraged that young people should vaccinate against COVID-19

**Pic 2:** uMgungundlovu Team from uMkhambathini Sub-district outside the venue



# UMGUNGUNDLOVU BIDS FAREWELL TO CUBAN DOCTORS WHO CAME TO ASSIST WHEN COVID-19 BEGUN

Many strategies were initiated to assist the country in fighting the deadly COVID-19 disease when the pandemic hit South Africa in March 2020. The former Health Minister Dr. Zweli Mkhize confirmed that the country of Cuba had offered medical assistance in the fight against the COVID-19 outbreak in South Africa. uMgungundlovu District received 3 doctors from Cuba who were mostly working at the Royal Show Grounds field hospital and later deployed to other facilities within the district when the field hospital stopped operating.

These were some of the efforts the Minister and his team made

to redouble efforts concerning preventive and reactionary measures aimed at flattening the virus' curve.

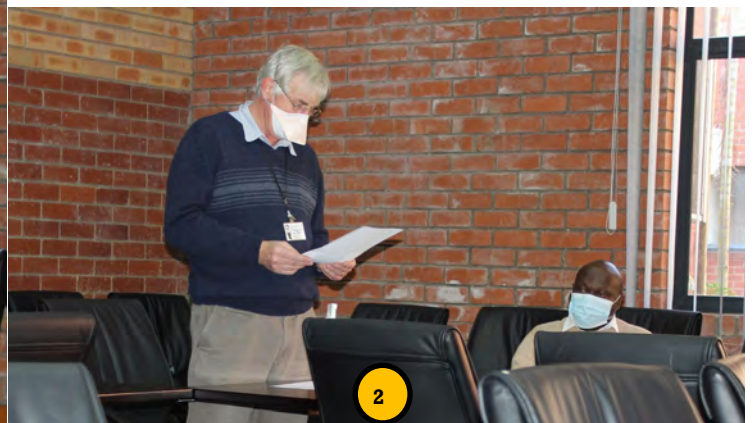
While government's primary preventative focus at the time was centered on mass testing for covid-19 and tracing people who were displaying signs and symptoms. Extra resources had also been allocated to hospitals and clinics hence the foreign doctors and experts were to assist in the frontline services.

The 2 doctors and an engineer, namely Dr. Lavina, Dr. Hiyolixis, and Mr. Rigoberto Adrian Castro who is an engineer had worked tirelessly within uMgungundlovu

District to assist when it came to the Pandemic. They had learned about the health system and amazing culture and traditions of the country, especially the areas they were allocated.

On 13 June 2022, the District office through the office of Dr. Tim Kerry had to say goodbye to the trio.

Dr. T Kerry, who worked very closely with them also had to bid farewell and mentioned how they have been instrumental. Lastly, Dr. M Gumede, who is also a product of the Department's Cuban Doctors' Bursary programme and did his medical training there was also happy to have worked with the team and wished them well. As they say in Spanish, adios.



**Pic 1:** Dr M.T Zulu, uMgungundlovu District Director presenting a certificate of appreciation one of the doctors

**Pic 2:** Dr T Kerry, District Specialist saying farewell and giving words of gratitude to the team

# A JOYFUL, PRAISEFUL RETIREMENT FAREWELL TO SAABS KUNENE

On the 26th of June 2022 the District Office team joyfully said “Happy retirement Saabs”. Ms. Saabs Kunene decided the time had finally come to say goodbye to the district and the departments of health. Saabs had been working hard for many years, dedicated to her duties as a Supervisor for the TB Programme in the District. She joined the uMgungundlovu District in the year 2003.

Ms. Kunene mentioned that this was the perfect moment for reflection and relaxation as well as spending more quality time with her loved ones.

She emotionally mentioned that she feels excited about the new opportunities and challenges that await her in this next chapter of life. She said she will spend her time doing the things she likes including farming, church activities, social activities, traveling, and spending quality time with her family including her grandchildren.

Colleagues and guests at the farewell party mentioned that it is hard to say goodbye to her as she was friendly with everyone and always took part in every activity that was being undertaken by the District office and facilities.



**Pic 1:** Saabs Kunene enjoying the music at her farewell party

**Pic 2:** Ms Party, receiving her gifts bought by her colleagues

**Pic 3:** The colleagues, guests and Miss Party went out for lunch

# PHUTHUMA WEEK, A STRATEGY TO INCREASE COVID-19 VACCINE UPTAKE

From 16 May 2022 to 22 May 2022 the department of health in Kwazulu Natal embarked on "Phuthuma Week". This was a strategy to regain the losses suffered by health services in the province as result of the negative impact of a multitude of factors in the last 2 years that include the pandemic, the July 2021 civil unrest, the devastating April 2022 floods and the unprecedented negative impact of misinformation and disinformation on the uptake of vaccinations in general. "Phuthuma" week was preceded by a week-long awareness campaign which started from the

08th-14th May 2022 to raise awareness around activities to take place in the Phuthuma week

The main focus for this week was on activities aimed at increasing vaccine demand through awareness, engagements and removal of physical barriers to access to vaccination services.

The uMgungundlovu District management team supported all facilities within the district by visiting the facilities and encouraging facilities to take part in the phuthuma week activities.

Health facilities were encouraged to adopt an integrated approach to COVID-19 vaccination by

combining services that will help citizens who suffer from other comorbidities and are more vulnerable to poor Covid-19 infection outcomes.

The "Phuthuma" week was focused on increasing uptake of Covid-19 and other vaccinations, Tracing and bringing back to care all our HIV & TB treatment defaulting clients, Bringing back to care all CCMDD inactive clients, Integrated screening for both communicable and non-communicable disease including malnutrition in children and linking to care, all persons needing care.



**Pic 1:** Mrs. Sindi Mbambo from the District Office interacting with clients at Gcumisa Clinic in uMshwati Municipality during a supervisory visit to the facility

**Pic 2:** Appelsbosch Hospital's screening tent was decorated and very welcoming

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# NURSES DAY COMMEMORATION “ NURSES YOU ARE THE VOICE FOR YOUR PATIENTS, ALWAYS PUT THEM FIRST”

**N**urses from uMgungundlovu District collectively celebrated International Nurses’ Day on 24 May 2022. The day was commemorated to acknowledge the sacrifices and precious contributions that nurses deliver to society by taking care of the ill and frail, and nursing them back to life.

The theme for this year’s Nurses’ Day as per World Health Organisation is "Nurses: A Voice to Lead - Invest in Nursing and Respect Rights to Secure Global Health".

Nurses of all categories gathered at Grey’s Hospital to be saluted and reminded that they are the voices of their patients and of the community. A variety of guests gave emotional and encouraging speeches. All of them had worked at all levels of nursing; from community outreach to hospital wards to top leadership positions. Amongst these guests were Dr. M.T Zulu, current District Director for uMgungundlovu District; Mrs. C.N Sosibo, current Director for Nursing Service for KZN Department of Health and Mrs. ZSI Ndwandwe, former Chief Executive

Officer of Harry Gwala Hospital formerly known as Edendale Hospital.

The guests were reminded that in the past two years, nurses and the health sector had encountered a pandemic no one ever saw coming, the COVID-19. The pandemic took many lives of their families, relatives, beloved patients, and of their colleagues and friends. They faced the pandemic daily, whether they liked it or not. Some got seriously ill with COVID-19 and are still recovering.

This amazingly executed event was planned by the Districts’ Nurses Managers’ Forum to celebrate life after everything the health sector has been through including Covid-19, and July 2021 looting which brought the KwaZulu Natal (KZN) Province economy to its knees and had more than 350 people die; and the devastating April 2022 KZN floods which took more than 430 lives.

Nursing is an essential service that has always been critical in times of crisis. We appreciate all the current, past and future nurses of our country.



Nurses of uMgungundlovu District looked like Angels in their white uniform at the recent Nurses Day commemoration. The nurses recited the Nurses’ pledge of service as it reminds them of the profession they took..



# REVIVAL OF BATHO PELE PRINCIPLES VIA FACILITY BATHO PELE CHAMPIONS INITIATIVE

The District Office together with Northdale hospital decided to be on a mission to revive Batho Pele principles. The Batho Pele Principles is an approach to getting public servants committed to serving people and finding ways to improve service delivery. These were initiated in the year 1997 and have been around since then. Sometimes it seems some public servants forget about the principles and their meaning.

There are many strategies to implement the principles, one of them is to have Batho Pele champions at facilities.

On 24 May 2022, a training session was held at Northdale hospital in partnership with the District Office's Communication department. Miss Thobile Hadebe, District Senior Communications Practitioner, and Mr. Henry Dlamini, Acting Public Relations Officer for Northdale hospital coordinated the workshop that was attended by Batho Pele champions from different departments within the hospital.

The Batho Pele champions are ordinary staff members from different departments who volunteer to be part of the

initiative and to champion Batho Pele principles in their departments and the hospital.

Despite the 11 Batho Pele principles, other topics such as human rights, the constitution, key populations, patients rights, and responsibilities, and the code of conduct part of the session.



Pic 1: Mr Henry Dlamini from Northdale Hospital emphasizing the importance of the code of conduct

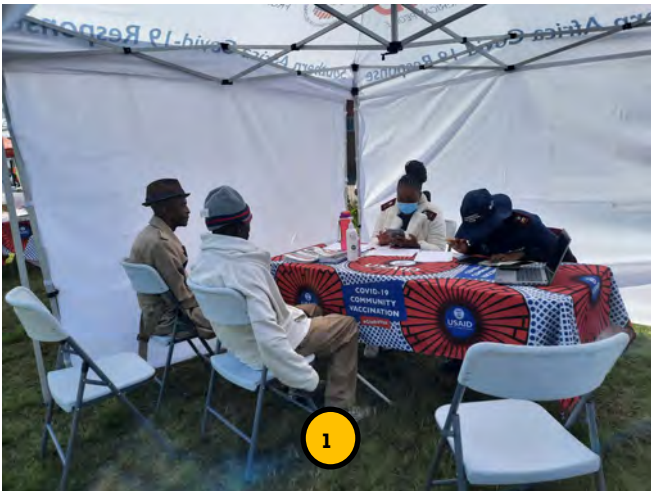
Pic 2: Miss Thobile Hadebe enlightened the audience on the importance of proper branding and good image for public servants and government facilities



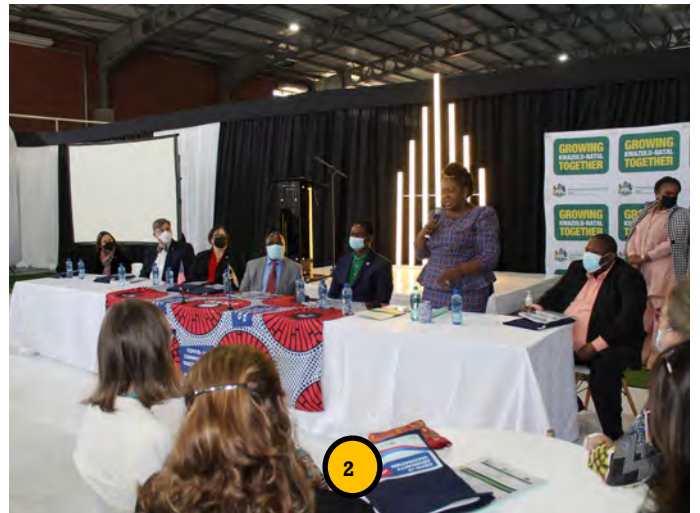


# GLOBAL VAX EVENT PICTURE GALLERY

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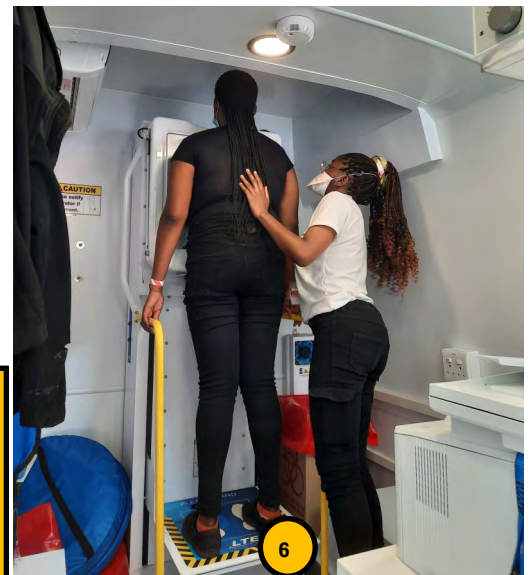
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**Pic 1:** Service specifically for males were provided  
**Pic 2:** KZN Health MEC addressing the audience during the signing of the memorandum  
**Pic 3:** Client receiving free dental screening  
**Pic 4:** Client receiving eye screening services  
**Pic 5:** Client getting COVID-19 vaccine  
**Pic 6:** Mobile Chest X Ray services were also available via a recently donated mobile X Ray vehicle



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# LOOK OUT FOR ...

During the month of July, look out for the following **health calendar commemorations...**

**Mental Illness Awareness Month :** A month to create and increase awareness on Mental illnesses. The objective is not only educating the public about mental health but also to reduce the stigma and discrimination that people with mental illness are often subjected to.

**4-8 July—Corporate Wellness Week:** A week to encourage mental, physical and financial wellbeing in a workplace. Workplaces are environments that should promote for employees to take care of their health and employers should create environments that promotes this.

**28 July—World Hepatitis Day:** World Hepatitis day is commemorated annually on the 28th of July to address the hepatitis virus, its causes and how to prevent it. According to <https://clicks.co.za/health/conditions/article-view/hepatitis> Hepatitis viruses A, B, C, D and E can cause acute and chronic infection and inflammation of the liver leading to cirrhosis and liver cancer. Bacterial infection, alcohol, toxins (including drugs) and autoimmune disorders can also lead to hepatitis. Hepatitis A and E are spread via faeces, often in contaminated drinking water, while B, C and D spread via contact with an infected person's blood or bodily fluids, making unprotected sex a common mechanism for hepatitis transmission. Hepatitis B and D can also be transmitted by infected mothers to their newborns The key to viral hepatitis prevention is vaccination. Hepatitis A and B are currently preventable with a vaccine. This vaccine will also protect you from Hepatitis D. Seek vaccination at your nearest health facility.

## uMgungundlovu District

SWITCHBOARD: (033) 897 1000

SWITCHBOARD FAX NUMBER: (033) 897 1078

EMAIL ADDRESS:  
Thobile.hadebe@kznhealth.gov.za

### KEEP IN TOUCH ...

Physical Address: 171 Hoosen Haffajee  
(former Berg) Street, Pietermaritzburg

Postal Address: Private bag X9124,  
Pietermaritzburg, 3200

**Web Address:**  
<http://www.kznhealth.gov.za/>



Compiled by  
**Miss Thobile Hadebe**  
Senior Communications Practitioner

