

Speech KZN MEC for Health, Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo on the occasion of the commemoration of the World AIDS Day 2010 at FET College in Madadeni

1 December 2010

Amakhosi onke akhona

Mayors of all the Municipalities who are also Chairpersons of the Aids Councils

Councillors

Head of the KZN Social Development Dept – Mr Bheki Nkosi

District AIDS Council

Community leaders

Traditional Health Practitioners

Principals and Teachers

Members of the South African Police Services

Abezindaba

Onompilo

Malunga omphakathi ahloniphekile

The World AIDS Day is an International day of action on HIV and AIDS which takes place every year on 01 December and was established by the World Health Organization in 1988 to focus attention on the HIV and AIDS epidemic. Observance of this day provides an opportunity for governments, non-government

organizations, churches, community organizations and individuals to demonstrate the importance of the fight against HIV and AIDS.

This year marks the 22nd anniversary of the World AIDS day. The theme for World AIDS Day 2010 is '*Universal Access and Human Rights*'. Through this theme global leaders are implored to work towards universal access to HIV and AIDS treatment, prevention and care and asked to recognise tenets as fundamental human rights.

Our citizens everywhere including those residing in Amajuba District need to know that fighting HIV and AIDS requires a collective effort in that:

- Everyone has to know their HIV status by testing for HIV;
- Young people have to delay having sex for the first time;
- Young people have to make informed choices to prevent unwanted pregnancies and HIV infection;
- Sexually active people are expected to be faithful to their partners and to use condoms each time they have sex;
- Pregnant women have to test for HIV early in their pregnancy and to use condoms each time they have sex;
- Those with TB must agree to test for HIV and those with HIV to test for TB so that they can get the right treatment.

Dear citizens, all of us, at all levels of society, be it Amakhosi, church congregations, schools, social settings, businesses and government

people, we are all called upon to show that we are responsible by making use of the services offered by government and partaking in the following Prevention Strategy:

1. Information, education, mass mobilisation

In that all of us need to be open about HIV and AIDS, disseminating information and teaching communities on this malady. In our mobilisation efforts we should be mindful of the fact that as a group, young people face particular risks for HIV: early sexual debut, sex with multiple sexual partners, unprotected sex, and substance and drug abuse leading to unprotected sex, promiscuity, age differences in relationships, peer pressure and a need to belong.

2. STI detection and management

The treatment of sexually transmitted infections can never be over emphasised. Neglect in this regard leads to complications that have far reaching implications; including being at high risk of contracting Human Pappiloma Virus (a precursor to cervical cancer), secondary inability to give birth, contracting other STI's, etc.

3. Know your status – HIV testing and counselling

The time has come for every person to know where he or she stands in as far as HIV is concerned. Those who are negative have to know so that they may develop means to remain so. Those found to be positive will get the help offered and begin to live healthily. . For the

whole Province we aim to cover more than 3.5 million people over a period of five [5] years. This testing campaign helps to ensure that all people eligible for ARV are identified and put on the programme.

4. Widespread provision of condoms (male and female)

Truth of the matter is that young women aged 15–24 are four times more likely to be living with HIV than young men the same age, and men are more likely to be infected with HIV in their later years, 25 - 49. Key risk factors for HIV infection include having many sexual partners, high levels of STI's, and either not using condoms or using condoms inconsistently. Our government is committed to the adequate provision of safe condoms as we plan to give each person who undertakes the HCT, a packet of 100 condoms.

5. Medical male circumcision

Statistics that we have show that we about **3 million males** in KwaZulu Natal and by all accounts we aim to circumcise them all over a period of five years. We also aim to extend this to all newborn baby boys so as have them circumcised before they are discharged from hospitals.

6. Prevention of mother to child HIV transmission (PMTCT)

We have to mention that AIDS has become the leading cause of all maternal deaths in South Africa and as such Mother to Child Transmission (MTCT) accounts for the vast majority of HIV infection in children. The solution here is the Ante-natal programme which is a comprehensive service package with interventions for care and management services throughout the antenatal, labour and delivery, and postnatal periods. Working together; we need to ensure that we increase the percentage of pregnant women who book for antenatal care before 20 weeks gestation.

7. Post-exposure prophylaxis

The antiretroviral prophylaxis is given after possible exposure to HIV, e.g. through needle stick or sexual assault, in order to minimise or prevent the risk of seroconverting to HIV following such exposure. We also decreed that every woman who alleges that she has been raped **must** be introduced to Post-exposure prophylaxis before she even reports her matter to the police. By all means we don't want rape victims to be sent from pillar to post at the risk of them acquiring HIV.

8. Post Test Counseling

HIV negative clients should be offered post test counseling that includes risk reduction and should be encouraged to repeat the test three months after the negative result to exclude the possibility of the window period.

Clients who test HIV positive are informed and counseled about their results and given possible means available to assist them on adherence to healthy lifestyle choices.

Today I need to emphasise that for our country to succeed in the war against HIV and AIDS, people of KwaZulu Natal have to work an extra mile since KZN has the highest HIV prevalence in South Africa and accounts for 28% of SA HIV infection. Our province also has the highest TB disease burden.

Amajuba District is also no exception to the prevailing trend of having a higher HIV prevalence amongst the ages 15-29 years which is indicative of early sexual debut.

We are also very concern about the high HIV prevalence amongst young females as this is indicative of trans-generational sex – younger females having sex with older men as the same age group males have a significantly lower HIV prevalence

- We need to work together to ensure that couples protect themselves by remaining faithful to each other.
- We all need to ensure that every time one starts a new sexual relationship – that both parties are sure of your HIV status.
- We all need to encourage pregnant women to test early in their pregnancy for HIV so that they can prevent their babies from getting infected with HIV.

- Community leaders should work very hard to stop stigma and discrimination against people living with HIV.

Our Government under the leadership of **Hon President Jacob Zuma** in 2009 announced ground breaking measures in the fight against HIV and AIDS. President Zuma decreed that every South African living with HIV should be started with treatment at a particular level. He told us to prioritise ARVs for:

- Patients with CD4 counts < 200cells/mm³ or with severe HIV disease irrespective of CD4
- Patients co-infected with TB/HIV or Pregnant women
- To ensure access to ART within 2 weeks in pregnant women, those with low CD4 counts, very ill patients, and those with MDR-TB or extensively drug resistant TB (XDR-TB);

The President together with the Minister of Health, Dr Aaron Motsoaledi have made it clear that it now remains a duty and responsibility of **ALL** health care workers to identify HIV-positive men, women and their partners, HIV exposed and HIV positive infants, children and youth so that they can access HIV care. All people who present themselves in our health care facilities are now encouraged to have:

- HIV counselling and testing (HIV)
- Blood pressure (Hypertension)
- Blood sugar (Diabetes mellitus)
- HB (Anaemia)

- TB screening (symptomatic screening,)
- Full clinical TB screening is yes to any of the 5 questions (sputum, culture, x-rays)

Here in the Amajuba District we are dealing with a population of **596 037** people of which **424 290** reside in Newcastle; 130 114 in Dannhauser and **41 633** at Emadlangeni. The estimated HIV prevalence in this area is **37.3%**.

For this district we have set targets a 178 223 for HCT which translates to 44 555 per quarter and in the past six months less than 40 000 people have come forward for counseling and testing.

Ladies and gentlemen we have to work very hard all of us to even get closer to what was outlined by our Hon **Premier, Dr Zweli Mkhize** as he expects the whole Province to achieve the following:

- (i) Improved Treatment Adherence Measurement of TB defaulter rate must decrease by 3%,
- (ii) Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI's) partner tracing rate to increase,
- (iii) Condom uptake to increase by 1%,
- (iv) Decrease underweight for age by 0, 5 % in 1 year,
- (v) Increase school enrolment and attendance of orphans and vulnerable children by 100 %.

- (vi) Increase participation rate in sports and recreation activities, and
- (vii) Create sustainable human settlements by 2014.

Lastly, fellow compatriots, the World Aids Day happen within the 16 Days of Activism calendar and as such we are reminded of our responsibility to the women and children of this country. The United Nations defines violence against women as; *“any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life”*.

Let us protect, defend and love the women and children of our land.

Remember, we are saying:

I am responsible

I thank you.