



# health

Department:  
Health  
**PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL**

## **SPEECH BY KZN HEALTH MEC, DR SIBONGISENI DHLOMO ON THE OCCASION OF A WORLD AIDS DAY AT AMAJUBA DISTRICT**

01 December 2016

We meet today to commemorate World AIDS Day under the theme:

**'IT IS IN OUR HANDS TO  
END HIV AND TB'**

As we do this, we need to keep on reminding one another that South Africa is home to the largest concentration of people living with HIV in the whole world.

Here we have 7 104 796 million people (ages 15-49) living with HIV, representing 19% of the global HIV burden.



Of this total number, 1 622 870 of those people living with HIV are found in KwaZulu Natal.

On this day again we get an opportunity to take stock of the progress we have made in the fight against HIV and AIDS which includes improving access to prevention, treatment and eliminating stigma associated with HIV and AIDS.

It is also on this day that we highlight the dangers of Blessers to adolescent girls and young women.

We also utilize this day to inform the public that TB is curable even if you are HIV positive

We need the support of all citizens as the South African Government has embarked on a deliberate effort to scale up HIV Testing Services and strengthen quality at all health facilities in line with the ambitious targets of HIV elimination by 2030.

**IT IS IN OUR HANDS TO END HIV AND TB'**

Since KwaZulu-Natal is the Province that carries the largest burden of HIV in the country, former Premier Dr Zweli Mkhize had advised that we need to do more than any other Province, stating:



“It is important to acknowledge that the burden of disease that is affecting South Africa

has its epicentre in this province. Similarly, to improve the overall health outcomes in South Africa, Kwazulu-Natal must first improve.”

Indeed, working together, we have done more as a Province with the following remarkable successes worth highlighting:

- The Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission (PMTCT) that has been reduced to very low levels of 1.2 %, in our Province whilst our country has also made its own notable strides at 1, 5%.
- The wise call by His Majesty the King that Medical Male Circumcision be revived as means to curb the spread of HIV. We are happy to report that in response to that call, we have circumcised more than 750 000 men and boys without a single loss of life since 2010.
- Millions of citizens are coming forward for voluntary counselling and testing
- To date, more than 1, 3 million persons have been initiated on lifelong antiretroviral therapy in this Province alone whilst the national tally is 3, 4 million on treatment. This in its own means that our people are now healthier and living longer.
- We have also rolled out the GeneXpert technology, which consist of 38 GeneXpert machines that are able to provide a faster diagnosis of TB and most importantly the Drug resistant TB
- Our life expectancy has increased from 49 years to 60 years.



It is also worth remembering that initiation to ARVs was previously a doctor driven programme but because of the big numbers of people being dealt with, we introduced the Roving Teams. Indeed the roving teams themselves couldn't cope and we resorted to training nurses under the programme known as the Nurse Initiated and managed Anti- Retroviral Programme. With these nurses deployed even at Primary Health Care Clinics, we successfully initiated more than 1, 2 million people on ARVs, just in this Province alone.

Our successes are also borne out of the initiative to partner with Taxi Associations which led to a programme of taking Health Services to Taxi Ranks.

We have also launched Dual Protection Campaigns targeting all Institutions of Higher Learning including TVET colleges in the Province to promote safe sexual and reproductive behaviour and also curb unwanted and unplanned pregnancies.

As of September 1, 2016, our Minister of Health, Dr Aaron Motsoaledi commandeered us to start initiating on ARV programme all HIV positive South Africans regardless of their CD4 count. This basically means that we are now testing and treating everyone who tests positive.



It is worth mentioning that Mathematical modeling has shown that Universal Testing and Treating could lead to steep reductions in HIV incidence and might potentially eliminate HIV as a public health problem over a period of 15-20yrs. It will also reduce HIV related morbidity and mortality.

We are ready for any number of people that may need to be initiated as we have started a programme of Decongestion of stable chronic patients from health facilities to centres closer to where patients live, better known as Central Chronic Dispensing and Distribution [CCMDD].

'IT IS IN OUR HANDS TO END HIV AND TB'

This is attainable if we work together to ensure that:

- 90% of all people living with HIV know their status
- 90% of people with diagnosed HIV Infection receive sustained Anti-Retroviral Therapy
- 90% of all people receiving anti-retroviral therapy have their viral suppressed (undetectable viral loads)

Here at Amajuba in terms of Medical Male circumcision we are failing to reach the Targets set per quarter which is 2244. For instance, in the 1st quarter we circumcised only 1543 males and in the second quarter dropped to 1460.

On HTS our targets here are 27682 per quarter and here too are not doing well as in the 1st quarter only 10864 males and 1 7314 females came forward for tested. Second quarter was much better with 20474 females and 13535 males testing.

Let us remember that to be HIV positive in recent past was taken as a death sentence; today, let us all agree, it is increasingly seen and accepted as a treatable and manageable condition.

We thus appeal to all the citizens to come forward and TEST. Help is available; no one should prematurely die now because of HIV.

Let us work together to create an AIDS free generation in this very District.

I thank you

ENDS

For enquiries, kindly contact Desmond Motha on 083 295 3901.