



PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL
CORPORATE COMMUNICATION SERVICES

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WORLD TB DAY 17 MARCH 2005 **“Frontline Health Care Providers”**

This year's theme is dedicated to community members who volunteered to become DOTS supporters. DOTS means Directly Observed Treatment Short course. DOTS – the internationally recommended strategy for TB control – cures patients, saves lives, prevents the development and spread of drug resistance, and reduces disease transmission. Widespread use of DOTS could save millions of lives. Here in KZN, 73% of the province has DOTS coverage.

With DOTS, TB patients receive free drugs and are observed by a treatment supporter taking every single dose of their six-to eight-month treatment regimens. This ensures that TB patients take all their drugs, and it also means that many can be treated at home instead of in clinics or hospitals.

More people die from tuberculosis (TB) than from any other curable infectious disease in the world. Last year in KZN there were 72 000 cases of TB.

To save time and make treatment more accessible, patients don't have to go to special TB clinics anymore, 96% of provincial clinics are now capable of diagnosing and commencing treatment on site.



WHAT IS TUBERCULOSIS?

TB is caused by the bacillus (germ) *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*. Pulmonary TB, or TB of the lungs, is the most common form of tuberculosis. However, TB can also affect other parts of the body where the TB germs are carried from the lungs by the bloodstream.

HOW IS TB SPREAD?

TB is spread through the air like the common cold. The TB germs are found in the sputum (spit) of a TB sufferer. When a TB patient coughs, sneezes or spits carelessly, the TB germs are spread into the air and can be breathed into the lungs of a healthy person who may then develop TB sores in the lungs.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF TB ARE:

- Persistent Cough (for three weeks or longer)
- Tiredness or weakness of the whole body
- Loss of weight
- Loss of appetite
- Night Sweats (even in cold weather)
- Pains in the chest
- Breathlessness
- Blood-stained sputum or coughing up blood (in advanced stages of the disease)

ENDS

For more informational please contact Lindiwe Khuzwayo on 083 393 9943 or Desmond Motha on 083 295 3901