



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

CORPORATE COMMUNICATION SERVICES

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CERVICAL SCREENING CAMPAIGN

Cervical cancer is a preventable disease, yet in South Africa it is estimated that approximately 1 in every 29 women will develop cancer of the cervix in her lifetime. Cervical cancer is one of the leading killers of women in KZN.

With August being Women's month, various activities and campaigns are taking place throughout the country to raise awareness and create platforms to discuss issues that affect women.

Provincial Health MEC Neliswa Nkonyeni will on Friday, 19 August in Ulundi launch a campaign and the cervical screening policy to raise awareness and support for cervical cancer. The campaign will promote a Woman to Woman education drive. The objective is that every woman will tell at least one other woman about cervical cancer and Pap smear, and ensure that the other woman, if over the age of 30 years, access the service and get her Pap smear result. The event will also aim at raising awareness on cervical cancer and the important role healthy lifestyles and good health seeking behavior play in the prevention of the disease.

Pap smears have been available for many years, but were mostly utilised by women in the private sector, women accessing contraceptive services, or women attending health services with symptoms.

All women over the age of 30 years should have at least 3 Pap smears per lifetime at 10-year intervals. These three Pap smears are provided by the department free of charge.



Cervical cancer mostly affects women over the age of 30 years, with women between 50 – 60 years most at risk. Pre-cancerous lesions of the cervix (not cancer) can take between 10 – 15 years before the woman develops cancer.

If the woman has a Pap smear during this time, the lesions can be treated to prevent cancer.

Of course women can have Pap smears more often if they wish.

Screening is the first step in the process to:

1) Diagnose women with no symptoms or complaints but who are at risk of developing cancer of the cervix, and

2) Treat the abnormal cells of the cervix to prevent cancer of the cervix.

Diagnostic tests are done on women with symptoms or complaints to identify the cause of their symptoms. It is a test to check for abnormal cells on the surface of the cervix (mouth of the womb). It is a simple, cheap test that is not painful. It picks up the abnormal cells of the cervix to ensure that appropriate treatment is given in prevention of the disease

The department is to hold screening services at various public health facilities for women free of charge during this month of August. This will not be a once off initiative as women are urged and encouraged to go for regular screenings before it is too late.

ENDS

For more information please contact Mrs Lindiwe Khuzwayo on 083 393 9943