



**HEALTH**  
KwaZulu-Natal

## CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS

Natalia, 330 Langalibalele Street, Pietermaritzburg, 3201  
Private Bag X 9051, Pietermaritzburg, 3200  
Tel.: 033- 395 3130, Fax.:033 342 0429  
Email: [chris.maxon@kznhealth.gov.za](mailto:chris.maxon@kznhealth.gov.za)  
[www.kznhealth.gov.za](http://www.kznhealth.gov.za)

---

TO: ALL MEDIA  
DATE: 31 MAY 2007  
EMBARGO: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### ABSTINENCE WALK 2007: 2 – 8 JUNE 2007

**The Minister of Health in the Republic of South Africa, *Hon. Manto Tshabalala-Msimang*; Premier of KwaZulu-Natal, *Mr. Sibusiso Ndebele*; the MEC for Community Safety, *Mr. Bheki Cele*, *His Worship The Mayor, Cllr Obed Mlaba* will send off the participants in the annual Abstinence Walk to encourage young people to use abstinence as a disease and unwanted pregnancy prevention method and hereby extend an invitation to the media to attend, participate and cover the event.**

#### BACKGROUND

The Abstinence Walk is a program supported by the Department of Health in partnership with the Centre of Hope, which is held annually to encourage abstinence as a prevention method for disease and unwanted pregnancies. The focus on young people is because of their vulnerability to social, physical and psychological abuse. There are challenges facing young people worldwide and in South Africa, such as Sexually Transmitted Infections including HIV. They face also problems of suicide, teenage pregnancy, as well as alcohol and substance abuse. These contribute to the high rate of morbidity and mortality amongst the young people, between 14 - 24 years, both in rural and urban areas.

It is the responsibility of all of us, young and old to take control of our lives by respecting our bodies and taking care of our health. For young people in particular, it is important that they get involved in various sports and recreational activities that assist to channel their energies positively and maintain optimal health.

Risk behaviour has a negative impact on the health of young people, which may interfere with the developmental stages of their life. For example abusing alcohol could lead to unprotected sex, unprotected sex may lead to unplanned pregnancies, STIs as well as HIV infections. These health problems may leave the young person emotionally scarred for life, and may disturb progress towards academic achievements.

#### ABSTINENCE CAN BENEFIT YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE FOLLOWING WAYS:

- Good academic performance and achievement of future goals
- Free from sexual transmitted infections and unplanned pregnancies
- No risk of unplanned pregnancies
- Free from psycho-social problems resultant from risky behaviours
- Informed choices and good decision making skills

---

uMnyango Wezempilo . Departement van Gesondheid

*Fighting Disease, Fighting Poverty, Giving Hope*

## HOW CAN WE ALL ASSIST OR SUPPORT THIS HEALTH PROMOTING PRACTICE?

Government Departments, NGOs and Civil Society have a huge responsibility to assist, guide, protect and empower young people, with knowledge and coping skills on how to deal with daily challenges facing them. Through joint interventions, young people will be able to understand the various risks and take responsibility to practice positive lifestyles that contribute to the moral regeneration of this country.

The communities, families and young people also have the responsibility to regenerate the moral fibre of our society.

The Department of Health has embarked on various strategies to promote and improve the health status of young people in South Africa. These strategies aim at ensuring that all health care facilities are accessible and their services are relevant to young people. The implementation of the National Adolescent Clinic Initiative (NAFCI) is one such example. Health workers in primary health facilities are trained to treat young people with respect and dignity, and respond to their basic health needs.

The message and advice to young people of KwaZulu-Natal is that for those who have started engaging in sexual practices, it is not too late to reverse your actions and abstain. To those who have not started, please delay and postpone until you are more mature and responsible enough to cope with the consequences of your choice, actions and decision.

There is a great need for all South Africans to join hands to improve the health and lives of our young people. Young people are our future leaders and as a country, we are challenged to empower them with all skills needed to take informed decisions.

### The walk will follow the following stages:

|  |   |                                      |  |
|--|---|--------------------------------------|--|
| <b>Start of Walk<br/>&amp; Official Send-off</b> | : | <b>2 June 2007<br/>10H00 – 12H00</b> | <b>King Zwelithini Stadium, Umlazi</b> |
|  | : | <b>2 June 2007<br/>14H00</b>         | <b>eThekwini City Hall</b>             |

Public addresses at the following areas;

|                               |   |                                      |   |
|-------------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|---|
| <b>Uthungulu District</b>     | : | <b>4 June 2007<br/>08H00 – 10H00</b> | <b>Ngwelezane Stadium</b>               |
|                               |   | <b>4 June 2007<br/>11H30 – 13H00</b> | <b>Esikhawini Mall, eSikhawini</b>      |
|                               |   | <b>4 June 2007<br/>13H00 – 16H00</b> | <b>University of Zululand</b>           |
|                               |   | <b>5 June 2007<br/>06H30 – 07H30</b> | <b>Richards Bay to Nseleni</b>          |
| <b>Umkhanyakude District:</b> |   | <b>5 June 2007<br/>10H30 – 12H30</b> | <b>Mtubatuba Town</b>                   |
|                               |   | <b>5 June 2007<br/>13H00 – 16H00</b> | <b>KwaMsane Stadium</b>                 |
|                               |   | <b>6 June 2007<br/>08H00 – 11H00</b> | <b>Mbazwana Multi Purpose Centre</b>    |
|                               |   | <b>6 June 2007<br/>13H00 – 16H00</b> | <b>Mseleni Hospital, Sports Grounds</b> |

- 
- KINDLY RETURN ALL DOCUMENTATION WHEN REPLYING

|                          |          |                                      |                                   |
|--------------------------|----------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
|                          |          | <b>7 June 2007<br/>08H00 – 10H00</b> | <b>Skhemelele School</b>          |
|                          |          | <b>7 June 2007<br/>13H00 – 16H00</b> | <b>Manguzi Sports Ground</b>      |
| <b>Zululand District</b> | <b>:</b> | <b>8 June 2007<br/>08H00 – 10H00</b> | <b>Jozini Municipal Offices</b>   |
|                          |          | <b>8 June 2007<br/>12H00 – 16H00</b> | <b>Pongola, Ncotshane Stadium</b> |

**(Isilo samabandla; King Zwelithini Zulu, MEC for Health, Mayor)**

For more information, please contact Ms. Sebe Zwane on 078 447 9611 or Mr. Themba Ndabandaba at 082 253 3200.

- 
- KINDLY RETURN ALL DOCUMENTATION WHEN REPLYING