



HEALTH

KwaZulu-Natal

CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS

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PRESS STATEMENT

TO: ALL MEDIA

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EMBARGO: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NO CHILD SHOULD DIE OF DIABETES! - WORLD DIABETES DAY 2007

The KwaZulu-Natal MEC for Health, Ms Neliswa Nkonyeni, will lead the community of St Chad in Ladysmith joining the world on Thursday, 22 November 2007, in commemorating the World Diabetes Day under the theme: *"Diabetes in children and adolescents"*.

Diabetes is one of the most common chronic diseases of childhood. It can strike children at any age, including pre-school children and even toddlers. Yet diabetes in children is often diagnosed late, when the child has diabetic ketoacidosis (DKA).

This year, the Diabetes Day campaigns will put more emphasis on how the younger generations can lead a healthy lifestyle to avoid Diabetes. Campaigns will further encourage initiatives that will lead to an early detection of Diabetes. The campaigns will also, amongst other things, raise awareness of warning signs of Diabetes; encourage initiatives to reduce DKA and distribute materials to support these initiatives.

In many countries, including ours, Diabetes is still thought as a disease that only affects adults only. As a result, children with Diabetes are diagnosed late, with potentially severe consequences, including death.

With this year's theme being *"Diabetes in Children and Adolescents"*, it is therefore necessary to ensure that every child has a right to a long and healthy life. The key messages are;

- No child should die of diabetes.
- More than 200 children get diabetes every day.
- Diabetes is different for children.
- Diabetes hits the poorest hardest
- All diabetes is on the rise in children.
- Children die because their families cannot afford the medication they need.

The MEC will also participate in the clinic construction project at St Chad's before proceeding to the event. The Department of Health wishes to invite journalists and reporters to the awareness event to be held as follows;

Date : 22 November 2007
Time : 09h00
Venue: St Chad's, Ladysmith

ISSUED BY:
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