



**HEALTH**  
KwaZulu-Natal

## **CORPORATE COMMUNICATION**

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  
www.kznhealth.gov.za

**TO: ALL MEDIA**  
**DATE: 05 JUNE 2009**  
**EMBARGO: NONE**

### **THE KWAZULU-NATAL DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH CARES AND CHAMPIONS THE NUTRITIONAL SUPPORT TO TB AND HIV INFECTED PATIENTS**

The KwaZulu-Natal Department of Health is seriously concerned with reports in the Sowetan suggesting that the department cares less about the sick and poor – especially TB and HIV infected persons.

The Department has a comprehensive nutritional programme that benefits pregnant women, poor new mothers, malnourished adults and children and patients on Tuberculosis (TB) and Anti-Retroviral Treatment (ART). The department piloted the feeding of patients on TB and ART as a way of improving treatment outcomes as we saw a number of poor people falling out of the treatment programmes because they had nothing in their stomachs. At inception, a limited budget was used, but as the programme was yielding good outcomes the department saw the need to roll it out. KwaZulu-Natal was the first province to have such a programme that supports those taking TB and ARV treatments.

In the current financial year, a total of R61 million has been allocated for this programme. The preliminary investigations done by the Office of the MEC indicate that there has been misunderstanding amongst officials. The supply of nutritional supplements is to support the clinical service to patients and this should be continued as a clinical item even if the non-clinical supplies in the clinics has been delayed or stopped. At no stage therefore shall porridge be stopped because that will increase patients stopping the taking of TB and ART medication, which is something the department will not want to see. The office of the MEC is following up on the matter as to how this misunderstanding amongst the officials could have a reason.

*“The TB, HIV and AIDS epidemics pose an inescapable challenge to our health system at large and to our health outcomes in combating TB, HIV and AIDS in particular. Our massive effort is to cushion the impact of the epidemic, and nutritional care and support is an integral element of our actions. Our response is to alleviate the overall burden of malnutrition and to reduce the severity and complexity of the impact that TB, HIV, AIDS and malnutrition have on each other”* believes the **MEC for Health, Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo**.

**ENDS**

**ISSUED BY:**  
**MR LEON MBANGWA: GENERAL MANAGER: CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS**  
**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH: KWAZULU-NATAL**  
**083 459 8596**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT DR SM DHLOMO ON 082 807 2718**

---

uMnyango Wezempilo . Departement van Gesondheid

*Fighting Disease, Fighting Poverty, Giving Hope*