

To : Media

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**Head of Department (Dr Sibongile Zungu) calls on churches to play a role in the prevention of diseases**

Traumatized by political violence of the 80's and early 90's; the United Congregational Church of South Africa (UCCSA) congregated in Inanda Newtown B where they awaited the Head of Department of Health, Dr Sibongile Zungu, to educate them about ways to prevent them from contracting the wide spreading virus, H1N1 Flu.

They shared with the Head of Department (HoD) that they are the face of poverty and disease, they also cried that they are victimised by criminals who are ruling the streets of this small township. They said they always congregate to pray for their salvation from these social ills.

When the HoD took the platform they sang loudly from their hymn book a song titled; Mangisondele kuwe Nkos' (Let come closer to you Lord). The lyrics tell the story of their anguish and pain. It goes like;

“Nasosizini  
Ngodumisa, Nkos'  
Uma kungabe  
Ngokuhlupheka kwami  
Ngiyasondezwa, Nkosi (My emphasis)  
Kuwe manje.”

The HoD said; “We have many diseases in society that we (together) can defeat. These include rampant corruption in the public service, growing culture of laziness among public servants, HIV and AIDS and the emergent of communicable diseases. If we could all do what we are supposed to do in preventing the spread of HIV infection, a lot of money could be released to focus on other things such as revamping our hospitals.

“Similarly with H1N1 Influenza, hundreds of people who have contracted the virus have been treated and are well. This includes the first case that was detected to be having this type of influenza. It was a four year-old from Mexico, he/she is alive and well. Our emphasis is for people to go back to personal hygiene practices. The people who are at high risk are the pregnant women, the elderly, people whose immunity has been compromised, those with diabetes, lung and heart diseases. We urge them to visit their clinic as soon as they develop influenza symptoms. In KwaZulu-Natal the numbers will soon reach a thousand and we need everyone to play a role. Church committees must discuss this matter in their meetings and the department will intensify its public education campaign” concluded Dr Sibongile Zungu speaking at the UCCSA congregation.

This is part of the government's campaign to educate and inform the public about H1N1 influenza. The main objective is to prevent its spread as it is taking the lives of the young and pregnant. The campaign will be taken to malls, taxi ranks and other public areas.

In this province we have had two deaths of pregnant women; we are awaiting four other deaths that are still to be confirmed by the National Institute for Communicable Diseases (NICD). The number of infected people was around 820 and any new cases will be communicated by NICD.

ENDS

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DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH: KWAZULU-NATAL

