

## **MEC Dhlomo ran 21 kilometers to promote a message of healthy lifestyles and physical activity as prolonging life and prevent diseases of lifestyle**

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Today, Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo MEC for Health in KwaZulu-Natal ran 21 kilometres to promote a message of healthy lifestyles and physical activity as prolonging life and prevent diseases of life style.

“Young people represent the future – they are our leaders who will continue to build and maintain the socio-economic fabric of communities and our nation. We, the older generation, have a responsibility to inform and to protect them from HIV and other health risks, particularly the risky behaviors leading to ill health such as alcohol abuse, unsafe sex and early sexual debut, tobacco use, violence, bad eating habits, lack of exercise. All these have been shown to negatively affect the health and development of young people, leaving them at a disadvantage for the future” Dr Dhlomo said after the race.

The MEC is no stranger to physical activity. His day starts with a gym for no less than an hour and half coupled with a healthy diet. He said he decided to lead a visible campaign against inactivity following many reports indicating that young people are increasingly becoming inactive. The 2nd Youth Risk Behaviour (MRC, 2008) reported that 40% of young people in the grades 8 to 12 are inactive. It further reported that around 20% of young people have attempted suicide at least more than once. The same percentages are active alcohol users.

“At the end of the month I will run a 42 kilometre marathon followed by the Two Oceans Marathon in Cape Town. Thereafter I will participate in the 2011 Comrades Marathon. I hope by that time I would have encouraged a sizeable number of fellow parliamentarians and ordinary citizens, especially the youth to join me in this worthy cause” Dr Dhlomo added.

The MEC hopes that the private sector will be able to also consider some of the Corporate Social Investments towards projects that encourage physical activity.

Ends

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