

Media Statement : MEC Completes the ultimate human race

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The MEC for Health in KwaZulu-Natal, Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo, completed the ultimate human race 30 minutes after the cut off time on his first attempt in an uphill run.

It was the MEC's first attempt at the Comrades Marathon which was an uphill from Durban to Pietermaritzburg. The MEC entered the race as part of his commitment to promote healthy lifestyles and physical activity in order to ensure that the country meets its outcome (outcome number two) of ensuring that people live long and healthy lives. His decision to enter the Comrades Marathon also earned him to be called a leader who leads by example.

He has continuously said that countries such as China, Cuba and Japan have a life expectancy around 70 years and above whereas in South African men's life expectancy is 47 years and that of women being 52 years. He also refers to a study done in United States which claims that for every R1 spent on the promotion of physical activity, there is a saving of R100 in medical expenditure on non communicable diseases.

"Our wish is to ensure that we resuscitate school sport as it can prevent young people from teenage pregnancy, drug abuse and similar behaviours," believes Dr Dhlomo. He recently called on communities to use available spaces to engage in physical activities.

He further said that in many township schools children do not engage in some form of physical activity and it is for that reason that there is a high rate of teenage pregnancy and drug abuse. He announced that in the recent future he will launch a programme to promote healthy lifestyles among public servants. "You sometimes see people waiting for 5 – 10 minutes for a lift to take them from the ground floor to the first floor."

Dr Dhlomo believes that the promotion of physical activity will help the country to ensure that its citizens are healthy, reduce social ills especially among the youth, encourage social cohesion and build better and healthy communities.

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