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'If we play, exercise and enjoy together we build cohesion that will protect our communities from social ills' - MEC Dhlomo

The community of uMbumbulu in the midlands was visited by the MEC for Health in KwaZulu-Natal Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo to promote the effective use of available places and spaces for the “health of the community and community wellbeing” and to deliver healthcare services.

“Our government, through municipalities, has invested huge amounts in providing spaces and places – such as community halls and multipurpose centers - where we live,” says MEC Dhlomo. “Unfortunately these spaces and places are largely used for funerals and weddings instead of using them for programmes that bring us together to build social cohesion and fight against social ills such as crime, disease and poverty.”

The MEC was speaking at uMbumbulu where the department, working with local Councilors, was promoting various services including regular check-ups for the elderly, physical activity and medical male circumcision. 20 children from poor families also received uniforms and school shoes from local business people.

Spaces and places describe the composite of the physical environment where people live, work and socialise, and include neighbourhoods, movement networks, schools, community halls and parks.

The aim of this visit, which the MEC will continue to undertake in the coming month, was to promote the on-going development and use of built environments where people live, work and play.

MEC Dhlomo believes through the promotion of the effective use of healthy spaces and places, he aims to; “(i) encourage the development of built environments that provide opportunities for physical activity and other health-related activities, (ii) continue to improve health outcomes for all communities, (iii) raise awareness of the relationship between physical activity and the environment, and (iv) contribute to a national goal of a long and healthy life for all South Africans”.

“We must regard these as ‘healthy spaces and places’ to support initiatives that help communities to enjoy, play and develop together,” said MEC Dhlomo to the hundreds of people who gathered to receive healthcare screening and many more males who came forward to be circumcised. He added and said healthy spaces and places are for everyone. “Anyone with an interest in the health of the community, community wellbeing and their local environment can benefit from promoting the use of available spaces and places. This is because it demonstrates the benefits of planning for active living and provides evidence on how the environment can promote healthy lifestyles.”



The MEC concluded by encouraging everyone; "It is for everyone who can make a difference to the overall health and wellbeing of communities to ensure that these available facilities are used for the benefit of the community at large. If we play, exercise and enjoy together we build cohesion that will protect our communities from social ills, including crime, thus making our communities healthy and safe."

ENDS

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