MEDIA RELEASE
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KZN Welcomes 125 Christmas Day babies

Staff at government hospitals throughout KwaZulu-Natal had their hands full on Christmas Day yesterday, delivering at total of 125 babies. The final tally reveals that 72 boys and 53 girls were born.

Speaking at Prince Mshiyeni Memorial Hospital (PMMH) in Umlazi yesterday, KwaZulu-Natal Health MEC Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo expressed delight at welcoming the new-born Christmas Day babies, although he said the number of teenage mothers remained a concern.

"We are delighted, of course, to welcome these new lives on Christmas Day, which is a very special day, as well all know," Dr Dhlomo said.

"I did speak to the young mothers as a father and MEC for health, to say it's very unsafe to be pregnant when you're a teenager. If you're a 17 year-old, and you're delivering a child weighing 3,8kg, chances of delivering safely are slim. It actually places your own life and the baby's in danger, and it is something that all of us as society need to begin to talk about and discourage. We should be encouraging our young people to abstain from sex, or practice safe sex at all times."

Dr Dhlomo also encouraged the young mothers to breastfeed their babies for as long as possible, citing the many health benefits of this.

The mood at PMMH was joyous as the Christmas babies were welcomed yesterday. Dr Dhlomo handed out gifts which ranged from blankets and clothes to disposable nappies. Hospital staff also contributed to the jubilant atmosphere, by singing Christmas carols such as Joy to the World, We Wish You A Merry Christmas and Azange kube nje, laph' ekhaya… (It's Never Been Like This In this Home).

Dr Dhlomo will be at GJ Crookes Hospital in Scottburgh to welcome New Year's babies on 01 January 2015.

ENDS

Issued by the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Health