

## **KZN Health MEC urges men to go for regular health check ups in order to beat prostate cancer**

KwaZulu-Natal Health MEC Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo has urged all men, particularly those aged over 50, to undergo regular health check ups in order to detect diseases such as Prostate Cancer.

Prostate Cancer continues to pose a health challenge and the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Health seeks to create awareness around it during October, which is Cancer Awareness Month, and beyond.

This type of cancer is the second most commonly diagnosed among men and affects 1 in 7. Generally, men over the age of 50 are at a higher risk of developing prostate cancer, but health studies have shown that Black males in particular, present with Prostate Cancer unknowingly 7 – 10 years earlier. By this time this is already at an advanced stage, compared to men of other races who present

MEC Dhlomo says early detection of prostate cancer through health examination helps a great deal and greatly improves the success of treatment.

“I would like to urge all the men of KwaZulu-Natal to be responsible and get tested for Prostate Cancer. They must seek help and advice from a health care professional so that their good health can be retained as they get older. Always remember that prevention is always better than cure,” says MEC Dhlomo.

The Facts:

### **What is Cancer?**

Most cells in the body are constantly dividing, maturing and then dying in a continuous, controlled process.

Cancer refers to a condition whereby cell growth is lost and cells grow uncontrollably.

The presence of cancer in a human body disrupts the regulation of cell growth. This means that instead of dying as they should, cancer cells continue to grow uncontrollably and form abnormal cells.

### **What is prostate cancer?**

- The prostate gland is a small organ found only in men and is located below the urinary bladder
- Cancer of the prostate develops in the prostate gland and the cancer cells may eventually spread outside the gland to other parts of the body.
- It is generally slow growing and progressive.
- One of the leading cancers in men worldwide and the number two cause of cancer deaths among men in South Africa.

### **Common symptoms of prostate cancer include:**

- Frequent, hesitant, or burning urination
- Difficulty in having an erection
- Pain or stiffness in the lower back, hips

### **Reducing the risk factors of prostate cancer:**

- A diet low in animal fat and protein is advisable
- Living a healthy lifestyle – physical activity
- Annual screening from the age of 50 or 45 years in the event of a family history of prostate cancer

- Health professional will advise on the blood test and a rectal examination
- Blood test: measure level of a protein called Prostate Specific Antigen (PSA) in the blood
- An increase in the PSA – referred for further investigation.
- Rectal examination: conducted to confirm the presence or absence of prostate
- Vital that this examination be performed for your own health and well-being.

### **How is prostate cancer treated?**

- Surgery
- Radiation therapy
- Hormone therapy
- Chemotherapy

Any or all of the above can be used at different times depending on the stage of disease and the need for treatment. However, this will be advised by the health care professional.

Ends