

MEDIA RELEASE
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KZN Health MEC welcomes new babies, urges pregnant mothers to seek antenatal care urgently

The dawn of 2015 has seen the arrival of 34 newborn babies throughout KwaZulu-Natal's state hospitals so far.

Speaking at GJ Crookes Hospital in Scottburgh this morning, KwaZulu-Natal Health MEC Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo announced that the province's New Year's Day babies were made up of 20 girls and 14 boys. They were born between midnight and 10h00.

Nonjabulo Mntungwa's bouncing baby boy, Yamukela, born at GJ Crookes, was described as the province's first New Year's Day baby, having arrived exactly at midnight and weighing in at 3,63kg.

Dr Dhlomo handed out gifts to the mothers, which included clothing, blankets and nappies.

Expressing his delight at welcoming the New Year's Day babies, Dr Dhlomo urged all women of child bearing age to seek medical attention as soon as they suspected that they might be pregnant. This, he said, would ensure healthy delivery of babies, while assisting the Department in its quest to keep the rate of Mother To Child Transmission of HIV at a minimum.

"We did not know when we chose to come to GJ Crookes on this day that we would find the first New Year's baby in the province and probably the first in the country, born here. The birth of a baby should be a happy event. But it can only be a happy event if the process that precedes it has been taken care of for nine months by healthcare professionals. Therefore, we are still making a call to all women of child-bearing age to ensure that once there are indications that they are pregnant, they must just come to our healthcare facilities. And if their pregnancy is confirmed, we will then assist them during the course of the nine months. That is the reason why among other things, this province is recording the lowest number of mothers transmitting HIV to their babies, at just 1,2%. If the mother is HIV positive but reports early to us, we are able to give them treatment which will suppress the virus so much that when they give birth, they will give birth to an HIV negative baby. We can do so much as healthcare professionals, but we can get more done as a society by educating people to support that call," Dr Dhlomo said.

Dr Dhlomo later joined eThekweni mayor James Nxumalo at King Edward VIII Hospital, where six babies – four girls and two boys – also born on New Year's Day, received gifts. The number of babies born today will be tallied and an updated figure will be provided later today.



KZN Health MEC Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo hands over a gift to Nonjabulo Mntungwa, whose baby Yamukela was born exactly at midnight, at GJ Crookes Hospital.



KZN Health MEC Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo and eThekweni mayor James Nxumalo congratulate Philile Mngoma on the birth of her as yet unnamed New Year's baby at King Edward VIII Hospital.



KZN Health MEC Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo and eThekweni mayor James Nxumalo congratulate Lindiwe Kunene on the birth of her New Year's baby Langelihle at King Edward Hospital



KZN Health MEC Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo shares a moment with mothers Hleziphi Khumalo and Mpume Shabane and their respective New Year's babies, Junior (Khumalo) and Nomkhuleko (Shabane).

Ends
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