

MEDIA STATEMENT:
13 December 2015

KZN Dept of Health adds its voice on the call to save water

The KwaZulu-Natal Department of Health has joined the call to urge the community, particularly health workers, to use water sparingly at all its health facilities. The shortage of water in the province due to severe drought, has a negative impact in the functioning of some health facilities, particularly those located in the most affected districts, including Ilembe District. The fact that some of these hospitals were built decades ago and were meant to serve only a few members of the populace, has not helped matters. Health facilities like Stanger Hospital use water cooled air-conditioning chillers, which consume about 20 000 litres of water per day. The shortage of water compels the department to, at certain instances, shut down these units. To mitigate the impact of this situation, as a short term measure, the department is in the process of building a borehole to add to the available one.

As a long term measure, the Department is engaged in a process aimed at the replacement of the old water cooled air-conditioning chillers which consume a lot of water with new air cooled air-conditioning chillers that do not consume water. To this end, a contractor has already been appointed and is on-site. These new air-cooled chillers are scheduled to be fully functional by March 2016.

The current drought crisis requires all citizens of KZN to play their part in conserving water. It is everyone's responsibility to save every drop because, as of now, every drop of water counts. The effects of climate change are a reality.

The following can be done to save water:

- Fix leaking taps or report them to local authorities immediately. A dripping tap (one drop per second) wastes up to 30 litres of water an hour.
- If you take a bath do not fill up the bath tub. Preferably take a 5 minute shower.
- Close the tap when brushing your teeth. Rather use water from a cup.
- Close the tap when shaving.
- Do not rinse glasses and cutlery under running water. Fill a basin and rinse in it.
- Avoid washing vegetables under running water. Use a bowl to do this; re-use the water for instance in the garden.
- To check if you have toilet leaks, put a few drops of food dye in your cistern. If the colour slips into your bowl, you have a leak. A leaking toilet can waste up to 30 litres of water per hour.
- Hosepipe usage is prohibited during this period. Wash your car using two buckets of water. This can save up to 300 litres each time you wash your car.
- Wash your car on the grass as this will water your lawn at the same time.
- Teach children not to waste water and engage them in water saving exercising, e.g. teaching them how to read a meter.
- Only water your garden with grey water before 10.00 am and after 4:00pm in the evening. Watering while the sun is high wastes water as most of it gets evaporated into the air with the heat of the sun.
- Avoid watering on windy days as the water easily evaporates.
- Make use of "grey water". This is the water from your kitchen and bathroom that can be reused in the garden.

Saving water is everybody's business, make every drop count.

ENDS