

MEDIA RELEASE  
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## **KZN Health HoD urges the public to start the New Year by getting a free health exam**

The Head of the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Health Dr Sibongile Zungu has urged the people of the Province to start the New Year on a good note, by getting a free general health examination at any of the Department's Primary Health Care facilities.

In a statement released today, Dr Zungu said: "As the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Health, we would like to advise fellow South Africans to start the New Year by going to their nearest clinic and getting a medical examination, so that they can know where they stand as far as their general health status is concerned."

Dr Zungu emphasised that every disease - whether it's HIV, the different forms of cancer, heart disease or diabetes - becomes easier and cheaper to treat and manage when discovered early. Which is why getting a health examination early – instead of waiting until the onset of disease - is crucial.

She called on all women to take advantage of the Province's "Phila Ma" and "Phila Mntwana" initiatives. The former assists women gain access to services such as breast and cervical cancer screening, health education, and other services, to encourage early detection of ailments and adoption of health-seeking behaviour.

The latter (Phila Mntwana Centres) render services such as HIV and AIDS support, child growth monitoring, screening for malnutrition, supply of vitamin supplements, diarrhoeal disease intervention, promotion of breastfeeding, screening for TB, tracing of defaulters; that is immunization and other well child services, referral for further management.

Dr Zungu also encouraged middle aged men to get tested for prostate cancer. (Although only 1 in 10 000 men under age 40 will be diagnosed for Prostate Cancer, the rate shoots up to 1 in 38 for ages 40 to 59, and 1 in 14 for ages 60 to 69. About 60% of all prostate cancers are diagnosed in men over the age of 65 and 97% occur in men 50 years of age and older. – Prostate Cancer Foundation)

In line with the Department's efforts to encourage health-seeking behaviour among men, all men accompanying women or children to healthcare facilities to undergo a health examination will receive priority.

"A medical examination is something that should be done at least once a year, and there is no better time than now to do that. In fact, people who haven't undergone a health test should consider themselves sick until proven otherwise. Therefore, we urge everybody to ensure that they are tested," Dr Zungu said.

According to the Department, preventing and managing lifestyle diseases, as well as promoting health and wellness, has never been more critical, especially if the quadruple burden of Disease facing South Africa (HIV and AIDS and TB; High Maternal and Child Mortality; Non-Communicable Diseases and; Violence and Injuries) is to be decreased and eventually eradicated.

"Leading healthy lifestyles characterized by regular physical exercise, a balanced diet and no smoking or drinking would result in a drastic reduction in the number of people affected by Diabetes, cancer,

heart disease and stroke and other Non-Communicable Diseases.

“To become a healthy nation, South Africans need to make informed decisions about what they eat, and whether or not they consume alcohol or should smoke, which are things that are detrimental to their health. They also need to engage in safe and responsible sexual behaviour.”

ENDS

Issued by the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Health