

MEDIA STATEMENT
22 May 2015

ARVs situation under control, says MEC

KwaZulu-Natal Health MEC Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo today held a fact-finding meeting with all 11 health district managers and district pharmacists over the state of the ARV roll-out in the province.

The district managers and pharmacists reported that more than 940 000 people are on ARV treatment, and 52 000 of them are children. During this meeting, it was established that over 75% of adult patients have been switched over to the Fixed Dose Combination (FDC) drugs. All districts reported adequate stock of this Fixed Dose Combination.

Thanking the district managers and their pharmacists, the MEC urged them to work even harder achieve a situation whereby 100% of HIV-positive were on FDC, which is already nearly the case in Harry Gwala and ILembe Districts.

Dr Dhlomo acknowledged the challenge which the province has experienced with the supply of ARV medication for children, particularly the single agent ARV drugs Abacavir and Lamuvidine. With the delivery of 50 000 units of Lamuvidine yesterday and 20 000 units of Abacavir today – and another 180 000 units expected by 7 June 2015, the supply and demand challenges would soon be overcome.

“The province has enough stock of the Fixed Dose Combination ARV drugs – therefore all adult patients receive their treatment. A small percentage of adult patients are on single ARV agents, due to various reasons. There is enough single agent stock for this small percentage of patients.

“The Department has experienced challenges with the supply of certain paediatric formulations (Abacavir and Lamuvidine). But the province has been managing these challenges through the implementation of a contingency plan. The arrival of Lamuvidine yesterday and additional stock of Abacavir means that we will have enough supplies going forward,” said Dr Dhlomo.

Dr Dhlomo has encouraged the use of Fixed Dose Combination ARV drugs, saying that they are cheaper and easier to take, which improves levels of adherence.

ENDS

Issued by the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Health,