

MEDIA RELEASE:

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## **Take care of your heart, exercise and stop smoking and drinking, says KZN Health MEC Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo**

KZN HEALTH MEC Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo has made an impassioned plea to all citizens to take better care of their hearts, by not smoking or drinking alcohol, and by following a balanced, healthy diet and exercising.

Speaking at a community outreach programme to create awareness about matters of the heart at that took place at the Masondeza area in MadadeniAmajuba District, yesterday (03 November 2016), MEC Dhlomo said: “People are urged to get used to eating boiled food, fruits and vegetables... Everything you eat has a bearing on your health. Lower your intake of oily food. The body only needs a particular amount of food.. don’t eat more than you need to. You don’t become fat by mistake. It’s a choice you make, whereby you eat more than you need to, and then not exercise. Get used to regular physical exercise. Don’t take the lift if you’re going to the first floor of a building.”

The gathering was a belated commemoration of World Heart Day, and was preceded by a 2,5km Health Walk.

MEC Dhlomo likened the human heart to the engine of a car, which needs to be serviced regularly in order to perform optimally and last long.

“Why must you smoke when you don’t have a chimney? The heart suffers a great deal when you ingest smoke and other toxins from alcohol, fatty food, and when you don’t exercise,” he said.

MEC Dhlomo said non-communicable diseases, also known as “diseases of lifestyle” – such as hypertension, high blood pressure, diabetes and cancer - are largely man-made, and can be avoided by following a balanced diet, and through regular physical exercise.

He urged society to be aware of risk factors such as smoking, drinking, taking drugs, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, obesity and stress.

“When your heart stops, everything comes to a standstill. Don’t let it happen to you.”

Continuing with the motoring analogy, he called upon the public to “service the body” by undergoing regular health screening.

“When your car’s engine becomes jittery, you take it to the garage to get fixed. But you can avoid those problems if you service it at regular intervals. But I cannot understand why we service our cars, but fail to service our bodies. Let us get into the habit of undergoing a general health check-up at least once a year.”

He said that people in countries where regular physical exercise is a way of life have a longer lifespan and are thus able to contribute to the growth of the economy using their skills.

“When you start falling ill at 40, due to non-communicable diseases, you are lucky if you reach 60. If you die at that young age, it puts pressure on the country because we lose your skill. It means the country has lost a potential 20 more years of your contribution to the economy.

“But with people who take care of their health, you find that non-communicable diseases only set in much later in their lives, when most of their work on this earth is done.”

MEC Dhlomo also took the opportunity to urge all parents and guardians of children under 5 to take them to the nearest clinic so that they can be vaccinated against polio and measles, free of charge. The polio and measles vaccination drive began on 31 October 2016 and runs until 18 November 2016.

ENDS

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