

TO ALL MEDIA
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Priest encourages congregants to down ARVs with Holy Water

KZN Health MEC, Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo has personally gone to the St Faith Apostolic Faith Mission Church in Jolivet, in the deep rural areas of Ixopo, to thank the leadership for encouraging its ill parishioners to attend the nearby Jolivet Clinic.

The MEC visited the church after he learnt from a NIMART trained nurse of the incredible support the church gives to the clinic. NIMART is Nurse Initiated and Managed ART programme which was introduced to ensure that nurses are trained to initiate and manage patients on Antiretroviral medication, which was initially a Doctor led programme.

Professional Nurse Silindile Khumalo informed the MEC that next to the clinic there is the church with a faith healer who uses Holy Water to heal sick people. She narrated that the healer is very powerful and that people have absolute trust in his prowess. Initially, she says sick people would priorities the church and its holy water and only present themselves to the clinic at a stage when they were critically ill.

As nurses, she says, they decided to have a meeting with the faith healer where they emphasized the importance of taking and adhering to TB treatment and HAART. She says the meeting was a great success as people are coming in droves to the clinic including pregnant women and babies who are now easily screened and treated for HIV and Tuberculosis.

The faith healer himself, Priest Nhlanhla Nzimande, confirmed as much when he met with the MEC. He started by asking MEC Dhlomo to approve the request of having the Jolivet Clinic operating on a 24 hour basis, saying:

‘Yes, people do come to the church sick, at all hours needing to be healed. Because of the good relationship that we have with the nurses, we do refer some to the clinic and when they come back with medication; we pray for it and those patients use our Holy Water to take the medication.’

Dr Dhlomo thanked the Pastor for this, saying;

‘as Doctors and Nurses we use our training and knowledge to treat people and if pastors and healers come and augment this with their calling, this indeed helps, as it adds hope to patients that they are going to get better. This we welcome.’

Appreciating the collaboration with the church; the Professional Nurse Sr Khumalo says the relationship has changed the disease complexion of the area. She says she remembers that not long ago there was a very sick 9 year old boy, now 11 years old who was brought to the clinic very sick. He had sores all over his body and after his blood was tested, the results showed that he had a CD4 count of 99 and had lost too much weight. She says his granny was utilising the services of the Church to treat the boy’s condition with Holy Water. Khumalo says:

‘After testing the boy, I felt a need to disclose to the child his condition there and then. I asked the granny to assist with this and fortunately the child accepted his status. After that, the Granny verbalized that she would not be in the position to come to the clinic every month to collect the boy’s medication because of her age.

True to her word the granny does not come to the clinic anymore but the boy on his own,

religiously collects his treatment and is very compliant.

Khumalo says being a NIMART trained nurse and supported by the church leadership has assisted in giving hope to multitudes of Jolivet families, saving their lives; reducing the number of orphans and increasing their life expectancy.



Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo, to his left, Priest Nhlanhla Nzimande and Sr Silindile Khumalo at the church

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