

Maternal mortality rate can be decreased if pregnant mothers become more proactive about their health, says KZN Health MEC, Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo

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NOT a single mother or child should die during a birth delivery in a government hospital. But in order for this ideal to be realised, young people should delay engaging in sex for as long as possible – and women of child-bearing age should visit their nearest Primary Health Care centre (clinic) as soon as they suspect they might be pregnant, so that problems can be picked up and addressed early.

This is according to KZN Health MEC, Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo, who yesterday officially opened a new maternity section at Somkhele Clinic, in Mtubatuba, on the north coast of the province.

The maternity section, valued at R3,9 million, has been donated by Tendele Coal Mining. It has the following amenities:

- Emergency Room
- Delivery Room with 2 beds
- Post Natal Room with 2 beds
- Ablution facilities
- Sluice Room
- Nurses' Room

MEC Dhlomo said: “The opening of this maternal ward clinic means that not a single person who falls pregnant must only come to hospital to deliver, having not attended the ante-natal clinic, because that causes massive problems. We have extended the clinic and built a

maternity section. There are nurses paid by government to assist you. All you need to do is come and use their services. This is in the interests of you and your baby.

“This clinic is not just a decoration, but it is for you to use, so that if there are health problems with your pregnancy, they can be identified early and the appropriate intervention can be made.

He said that Somkhele clinic was ready to deal with the five major causes of maternal deaths, which are:

- Non-pregnancy related infections mainly due to AIDS;
- Obstetric haemorrhage (excessive bleeding);
- Complications due to hypertension;



- Pregnancy related infections;
- Complications of pre-existing medical conditions such as heart disease and diabetes.

“All of these are things that can be avoided. If you are HIV positive, we urge you to come to the clinic so we can check you and give you medication... If you’re experiencing too much heat, don’t try and fan yourself to get cooler. Come and get tested.”



MEC Dhlomo said that when the Anti Sugar Daddy Billboards were launched at Hlabisa three years ago, this had been in response to the 1575 births delivered by girls under the age of 18.

"Indeed, these are mostly unplanned and unwarranted pregnancies. They actually put the lives of both the young mother and her unborn baby at risk.”

The MEC then urged parents to advise their children not to get involved in romantic relationships too early – and to abstain from sex for as long as possible.

He said that young girls who can no longer abstain from sex to go to their nearest clinic and use Dual Protection, which is the use of female contraceptive methods while using condoms during every episode of sexual contact. This ensures protection against both sexually transmitted infections - including HIV - and unwanted pregnancies.

MEC Dhlomo also warned health care workers about the dangers of admonishing young people when they seek family planning services, cautioning that failure to assist result in these young girls later presenting themselves pregnant or complicating from unsuccessful backstreet abortion. Dhlomo implored the healthcare workers to ensure that more health facilities offer Adolescent and Youth-Friendly health services.

Earlier in the day, MEC Dhlomo visited Ngwelezane Hospital, where old structures are being demolished and a new medical ward section with 192 beds is being built. A new Crisis Centre is also under construction.



“This building will significantly improve the services of the facility. We appreciate the infrastructure allocation that makes us build clinics and hospitals in areas that no previous government ever thought of doing. The ANC government is building hospitals in deep rural areas like Pomeroy, Jozini and Dannhauser.

“At the same time, we are obliged to revitalize and expand the existing facilities like Ngwelezane, Lower Umfolozi Memorial Hospital, Edendale, Madadeni and many others.”

<<<KZN Health MEC Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo unveils the plaque to mark the official opening of the maternity ward at Somkhele Clinic in Mtubatuba, on the north coast of KwaZulu-Natal yesterday.>>> Photo: Themba Mngomezulu>>>

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