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KZN Health MEC, Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo takes the fight against HIV to the Durban



University of Technology

Health MEC, Dr Dhlomo has joined hands with the Higher Education (HE) Sector of Civil Society to fight the spread of HIV in institutions of Higher Learning in EThekweni. The Sector reports to the local and District AIDS Council and is targeting the Durban University of Technology; Mangosuthu University of Technology and University of KwaZulu-Natal. The objectives of the Sector launch are to:

- Bring together key role players to work in an integrated manner to promote the containment of the HIV and AIDS pandemic.
- Minimize the rate of new HIV, AIDS and sexual transmitted infections in higher education institutions,
- Strengthen partnerships within the private and public sector towards containment of the HIV and AIDS pandemic, as well as,
- Support and give hope to the infected and affected to improve and prolong life.

In giving support to the initiative, MEC Dhlomo pleaded that all the TVETs in the District should also be included, saying:

‘I am also in full agreement with your outlook of viewing students as a key population to be catered for as indeed the majority of them fall into the age category of 15 to 24 years. This is the group in which our country’s leaders have directed that we all concentrate upon if we are serious about stopping new HIV infections.’

MEC says it is now an unforgivable folly to see people and students in particular, continue dying of HIV and TB when help has been made available and services are offered free of charge.

The management of the University was praised for the support it continues giving to initiatives like the First Thing’s First Campaign as well as the Graduate Alive Programme,

both of which are aimed at empowering young students to remain HIV negative as long as they could and also prioritize learning.

Students were also called upon to get tested and also come forward for circumcision. Dhlomo says help is at hand and given free of charge, declaring:

‘We are currently implementing a National Strategy called 90 -90- 90, which stand for:

- 90% of people living with HIV to be tested and know their status
- 90% of HIV positive individuals to be put on Treatment
- 90% of people on treatment to be virally suppressed to undetectable levels of viral loads thus reducing transmission.

All these efforts will succeed only if they are supported by behavioural change amongst our youth and we will then start talking about the AIDS free generation.’

ENDS