

MEDIA RELEASE:  
16 July 2016

## **KZN close to reaching medical male circumcision milestone of 700 000; patients urged to get their children circumcised**

THE KwaZulu-Natal Department of Health is close to reaching the milestone figure of 700 000 men and boys circumcised under its Medical Male Circumcision programme in just five years.

This emerged at a presentation by the Medical Male Circumcision component of the KZN Department of Health in Durban yesterday (15 July 2016), two days before the start of the 21st International Aids Conference to be held at the Inkosi Albert Luthuli International Convention Centre.

The conference is an opportunity to take stock of the progress the world is making in improving access to prevention, treatment and eliminating the stigma associated with HIV and AIDS.

South Africa has turned the tide on HIV and Aids and is now a model country in the management of this disease. The country has the largest ARV programme in the world, with 3.4 million people on treatment, and 1,1 million of them from KZN.

However, challenges remain.

Research findings released by Statistics SA recently show that Tuberculosis and HIV-related illnesses remain the two leading causes of death among young people.

And, according to the National Department of Health, at least 2000 women aged between 15 and 24 are contracting HIV, in many cases from men who are much older than them.

Medical Male Circumcision (MMC) is a key aspect of the country's strategy to curb the spread of HIV, as it has been proven to reduce chances of acquiring HIV by circumcised males engaging in sexual intercourse by approximately 60%.

MMC is also noted to have benefits of keeping the male genital organs in a good hygienic state, reducing the chances of penile cancer and reducing the chances of the transmission of human papilloma virus which may lead to cervical cancer in the female partner.

Following a call in 2009 from His Majesty the King, the Provincial Government through the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Health embarked on a drive to promote and strengthen Medical Male Circumcision (MMC) in the Province.

Since 2010, when the Department established the KwaZulu-Natal Medical Male Circumcision Centre of Excellence, it has circumcised more than 662 000 males. This excludes the estimated 24 000 men and boys circumcised during the July 2016 school holidays, which would increase the number to 684 000.

KwaZulu-Natal Health MEC Dr Dhlomo says: "We would like to really urge parents and

caregivers to take this opportunity to ensure that their children attend these camps and undergo Medical Male Circumcision (MMC) because it is safe and has great potential to turn around the prevalence of HIV and change our future for the better.

“We’d like to appeal to adult men who are not circumcised as well to undergo this procedure. Medical Male Circumcision is free and is performed discreetly and by medically-trained experts. This means minimum pain or discomfort for those who are being circumcised. The healing process is relatively quick and the health benefits are life-long.”

If you want to get circumcised, you must:

- Go to your nearest clinic where you will get advice and support;
- Prepare to be tested for diabetes, High Blood Pressure, TB and HIV

ENDS

Issued by the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Health