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Health MEC calls on communities to support Township Fun Races

KZN Health MEC, Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo is calling on people of all ages to join him as he partakes in the 10 kilometre race that will take place in Chesterville Township, Sunday, 18, September.

The race taking place for the first time in this area starts at the Chesterville Sports Ground at 7h00, follows the Westville route and again finishes at the Sports Ground.

MEC Dhlomo says it is important for communities to start getting used to physical training as means to curb obesity which he describes as a risk factor for non-communicable diseases [NCDs].

"Overweight and obesity have serious health consequences. Raised body mass index (BMI) is a major risk factor for NCDs such as cardiovascular disease, hypertension, stroke, type 2 diabetes and numerous cancers, including colorectal, kidney and oesophageal cancer. These NCDs not only cause premature mortality, but also long-term morbidity. But when people engage in physical exercise, they delay the onset of these diseases.

“And those who already have such diseases delay the onset of the complications of such diseases if they exercise. Some even reduce the treatment they use, because their bodies and systems get rejuvenated. Government saves a lot of money when people don't get sick. In fact, physical exercise is a preventative medicine.”

MEC Dhlomo advises that the high mortality that results from these conditions is mostly preventable through modification of four main risk factors, namely:

- Tobacco use
- Physical inactivity
- Unhealthy diets, and
- Harmful use of alcohol

MEC Dhlomo emphasises the fact that we all have a role to play in the attainment of the overall health sector goal of “a long and healthy life for all South Africans.” He also says the staging of these healthy runs can also deliver other spin-offs:

‘If we support the fun runs being staged in the townships, it will not just be for our health but we will also give credence to the call by the Premier to grow the townships economy as the participants and spectators will buy what is offered in areas where the races are taking place.’

The next race the MEC will partake on is the ongoing KwaMashu to Umlazi townships’ one that will take place next weekend. ‘Please join in numbers to surpass the 5000 figure of participants currently participating on this one, health is the responsibility for all; says MEC Dhlomo.



MEC Dhlomo in another race at Empangeni early this year.

ENDS