

MEC Dhlomo welcomes KZN's 50 Christmas day babies; urges tourists and revellers to give gift of life by donating blood

25 December 2017

KWAZULU-NATAL Health MEC Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo has reiterated the call that all pregnant mothers should attend antenatal clinics according to schedule, to ensure early detection of any potential health risks for themselves and their unborn babies. MEC Dhlomo was speaking at King Edward VIII Hospital, where he also announced that 28 Christmas babies – 16 boys and 12 girls - had been born in the province by 7am today. As at 10h00, the number had risen to 50 Christmas babies, with 26 girls and 24 boys making their Christmas Day arrival. In the true Christmas spirit of giving, MEC Dhlomo and acting Head of Department Dr Musa Gumede handed over gifts - including baby clothes, nappies and blankets - to four mothers and their Christmas Day babies at the hospital. MEC Dhlomo expressed concern, however, that at King Edward VIII Hospital, one of the mothers had never attended an antenatal clinic, and had therefore not been booked to deliver.

“That is not a good story to tell because in this province we want to make sure that mothers deliver healthy babies. [Not attending antenatal clinics] makes the delivery very risky. Antenatal clinics should be a non-negotiable, because when we know your condition as a mother, when we detect any challenges early, even if you are HIV positive we can guarantee your safety and that of your baby,” said MEC Dhlomo. He said it is also worrying that three of the Christmas Day mothers, who gave birth at Murchison, Newcastle and Mahatma Gandhi hospitals, are just 16 years old. “We are always concerned when young people fall pregnant at a young age because it is very unsafe. If you're a young person under the age of 18, and you're delivering a big baby, which does happen, chances of delivering safely are slim. It actually places the mother's own life and the baby's in danger.” He called on young people to either abstain from sex or use Dual Protection (a combination of condoms and female contraceptive methods) in order to avoid unplanned or unwanted pregnancies.

MEC Dhlomo also called on festive season revellers to consider giving the most precious gift of them all at this time: donating blood. A regular blood donor himself, MEC Dhlomo said: “I have been in contact with the South African National Blood Service, and they are saying that they have enough blood stocks to last two and a half days. We therefore wish to call on all South Africans, even if you are here on holiday, to make sure you donate a pint of blood. With so many people visiting our province, incidents may happen where people may end up needing blood. So, the blood that you donate could actually save lives. And that is the most precious contribution that you can make.”



Cherol Bulose from KwaDabeka looks on as MEC Dhlomo holds her Christmas Day baby Thandolwethu, alongside (from left) Ethekewini District Director Ms Penny Msimango; acting Head of Department Dr Musa Gumede; Head of Ministry Mr Bheki Nzimande, sister Zoleka Ngobese and office manager Mr Linda Zondi.



Dr Gumede and MEC Dhlomo hand over gifts to Sindi Tshabalala from Clare Estate, who named her Christmas Day Baby Luminathi (Uthando).



Cherol Bulose from KwaDabeka looks on as MEC Dhlomo holds her Christmas Day baby Thandolwethu, alongside (from left) Ethekwini District Director Ms Penny Msimango; acting Head of Department Dr Musa Gumede; Head of Ministry Mr Bheki Nzimande, sister Zoleka Ngobese and office manager Mr Linda Zondi.