

# Regular breast inspection can help us beat cancer, says KZN Health MEC

29 November 2017

KwaZulu-Natal Health MEC Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo has encouraged women to get into the habit of regularly inspecting their breasts in order to detect any irregularities such as lumps or sores, which can be a sign for breast cancer. The MEC says that men also have a role to play in this regard, as they can also assist in the inspection of their partners' breasts – with their permission of course.

Speaking to community members at KwaNzimakwe, under the Ray Nkonyeni Local Municipality (Ugu District), on the south coast of KwaZulu-Natal yesterday (28 November 2017), MEC Dhlomo said that breast and cervical cancer are the two most common cancers afflicting women in South Africa.

*Because of early detection of breast cancer, many women are alive today. In fact, we want to have a situation whereby in the next 10 years, the only cancer we talk about is cervical cancer because it is able to hide. It is unlike breast cancer which is much easier to detect. I want to call upon all women to get used to inspecting their breasts. Occasionally, just feel your breasts and check if there's anything unusual. Stand in front of the mirror, lift your hands and observe if both breasts go up. If one of them doesn't, then that's a sign that something may be wrong. That is when you must go to a health facility near you for a check-up. Men can also play a big role in this regard. If they don't help their partners and problems arise, then they are culpable, he said.*



MEC Dhlomo

*with Inkosi Bhekizizwe Nzimakwe and officials from the department.*

MEC Dhlomo then turned his attention to cervical cancer, saying that it is the second most common cancer among women in South Africa, after breast cancer. Whereas cervical cancer used to affect older women in their 60s, it is becoming increasingly common among women in their 30s. In light of this, the National Health Council has formulated the National Cervical Cancer Prevention Policy (NCCPP) and the Breast Cancer Prevention and Control Policy, whose main aim is to ensure that the early symptoms of cancer are identified early.

*With the new approach, we use Liquid-Based Cytology (LBC), which is considered to be an alternative to conventional cytological investigations, also known as the Pap smear. This ensures*

*a good quality and clean slide which is easier to interpret, and reduces the need for repeat pap smear thus saving costs.* said Dhlomo.

He urged parents to warn their children about the dangers of getting involved in inter-generational and transactional sexual relationships with older men as this is a major contributor to new HIV infections, especially among women aged 15 – 24.

MEC also announced a new patient referral system for patients in the area. Previously, non-emergency patients who attend the local Ntabeni Clinic were referred to Gamalakhe Clinic before being transferred to Port Shepstone Regional Hospital. With the new system taking effect, patients can now be referred straight to a Gateway Clinic at Port Shepstone Hospital for assessment and also be admitted to the hospital if the situation warrants it.

[Step by Step breast inspection](#)