

Fight against TB receives major boost from Amakhosi

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Efforts by the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Health to halt the spread of TB and intensify awareness about it have received a major shot in the arm in the form of support by the provincial House of Traditional Healers.

At a meeting with senior traditional leaders at Mbumbulu today, KZN Health MEC Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo expressed his delight about collaborating with amakhosi to maximise awareness about this disease.

"Since the massive TB awareness campaign was announced by His Majesty, our King on 24 March this year, we have taken it upon ourselves to come and work out a plan with amakhosi. Today we had a successful meeting with Chairperson Inkosi Phathisizwe Chiliza, the provincial chairperson of all amakhosi and other amakhosi at Mbumbulu. We worked out a plan that the success that we see on medical male circumcision is embedded on the fact that it was announced by our king and with the support of amakhosi. It was run, and supervised by Izinduna and amakhosi. We want to piggyback on that same principle in pushing this campaign as announced by our king.

This has been a very successful meeting. In the next two days, inkosi Chiliza is going to invite the Department to come in and share this bigger plan with all amakhosi and then it will kick off throughout KZN.

TB remains a global public health challenge and South Africa's number one leading cause of natural deaths especially among men. It's an infectious but preventable and curable disease caused by the bacillus *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*. It typically affects the lungs (pulmonary TB) but can also affect other sites (extrapulmonary TB). The disease is spread when people who are sick with pulmonary TB expel bacteria into the air, for example by coughing. South African has set a target of finding 100 000 undiagnosed TB patients and put them on treatment by the end of March 2019.



Inkosi

Maphumulo, MEC Dhlomo, Inkosi Hlengwa, Inkosi Chiliza, Inkosi Mkhize, Prince Nhlanganiso



Zulu after their successful meeting

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[Inkosi Chiliza](#)

Commenting on the outcome of today's meeting, as well as on efforts to fight the spread of TB, Inkosi Chiliza said: *"On behalf of amakhosi in KZN, we wish for the whole province and South Africa at large to know that today's meeting has borne significant fruit. We had a meeting with MEC Dhlomo to drive home the point that His Majesty, the King, has spoken out and expressed his concern that TB is decimating the people of this province, and to consider what can be done to halt this. Today, we took an extremely important decision that in our next meeting with all traditional leadership structure, including portfolio committees that deal with health, all the way to indunas and all relevant committees, that everyone must understand that the fight against TB should not be waged by government alone, but rather the whole community.*

As the House of Traditional Leadership, we will stand up and ensure that this message reaches all the relevant structures to map out a well-co-ordinated way forward."