

Health MEC, Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo appraise the Mbotho Community of Adolescent and Youth Friendly Health Services offered at Mbotho Clinic

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MEC Dhlomo visited the Kwa Mbotho area in the Ugu District to appraise the community of the Adolescent and Youth Friendly Health Services offered at Mbotho Clinic

This is a type of service which aims at ensuring that adolescents and youth between the ages 10-24 years of receive health care services in a manner that is user-friendly and take into consideration that their needs are addressed efficiently and timeously

The Youth Friendly service concept was established by MEC in 2014 as means to also

- Provide comprehensive, integrated sexual and reproductive health services
- Promote test and treatment for HIV/AIDS, TB as well as Non Communicable Diseases
- Caution against substance abuse and violence
- Promotion of healthy nutrition; healthy living and physical training as means to curb obesity amongst the youth
- Empower adolescents to be aware on youth matters so that they can be responsible for their own health and well-being.

MEC Dhlomo informed the community that Mbotho clinic already has a trained AYFS champion whose sole responsibility is to deal with adolescent's clients, saying:

"This Clinic has dedicated clinic times (Happy Hour) for adolescents and youth from Monday to Friday between the hours of 15h00 and 16h00. During this hour dedicated facility staff members provide young clients an opportunity to interact with health care workers, freely asking questions and made to receive health services without the fear of being judged or seen by an elderly from their community. This type of service also entails fast-queuing of learners who come in wearing school uniform so that they can be attended to first and be free to go back to school. Most importantly the Champion does conduct school visits where issues of alcohol and drug abuse as well as teenage pregnancy are discussed and discouraged."

The MEC, addressing the youth from local high school encouraged them to abstain and focus in their studies: *"With the HAPPY HOUR initiative, we are attempting to reduce teenage pregnancy; in fact we aim at cutting it to ZERO. At schools and tertiary institutions, we inform our youth of 'First thing first campaign' aimed at reminding them about the priorities amongst which is to attain a certificate, diploma or degree. We caution all of you not to be fooled and enticed by Sugar daddies who want to use your bodies and dump you afterwards."*

Responding about the Adolescent and Youth Friendly Health Services now available, a student from the local Mlotshwa High School hailed as a great success since with their Champion they are able to openly talk about topics their parents are shy to address.

