

MEC Dhlomo leads pre-world Aids day activation at Amajuba (Newcastle); launches new contraceptives policy; and says retired nurses have a huge role to restore the culture and ethos of the profession

30 November 2018

KwaZulu-Natal Health MEC Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo has kicked off a series of pre-World Aids Day events at Amajuba district, where he is the political champion.

These activations included aerobic exercises, a 2km #ThumaMina walk earlier this morning to create awareness about HIV and AIDS, TB and cancer. He also had meetings with retired nurses at Amajuba and Uthukela districts, to discuss how they can plough their knowledge and skills back into the Department.

MEC Dhlomo also launched the new and revised Contraceptives and Fertility Planning Strategy (2019-2023), which aims to ensure, among other things, that more women have access to reproductive health services - and that men play an active and responsible role in this regard.

The KwaZulu-Natal Department of Health, along with other Government departments, will join the rest of the globe to commemorate World AIDS Day tomorrow, 01 December 2018, under the theme "Know Your Status - Cheka Impilo.

World AIDS Day, which has been observed on 1 December every year since 1988, is dedicated to raising awareness on the AIDS pandemic caused by the spread of the HIV virus. The day is also used to mourn those who have died of AIDS.

MEC Dhlomo will observe the day at Section 7, Madadeni, at Amajuba District tomorrow at 09h00.

Referring to the decision to work with retired nurses, MEC Dhlomo said, "The retired nurses spoke to us and said that there are certain values and cultures that have to do with the nursing profession that seem to be disintegrating, and must be revived. The nurses are saying, 'We are retired, but we are not tired.'

"In addition to treating patients with care and advocating for them at all times, the retired nurses are talking about the need to have an equipment pool... You can't have one broken machine and run around looking for a replacement because the one that is broken was the only one available."

"They're also saying a nurse was meant to wear shoes that have laces, not be in high heels, because they cannot predict what will happen during the course of a day. If a nurse has to run and push a patient quickly on a stretcher to theatre, or to casualty, the nurse must be able to do so without fear of the shoes falling off. So, going back to basics is what they're educating us about. We're going to take a lot of lessons going forward because nurses, among all healthcare professionals, are the people who stay with the patient the longest. They are the ones who know the patient better than anyone else. So, we must tap into their expertise because they are rich with knowledge and wisdom. All that's left is for us to reach out to them."



MEC Dhlomo said the new and revised KZN Provincial Contraceptive and Fertility Planning Strategy (2019 – 2023) seeks to address and reduce the high proportion of unplanned pregnancies among teenage and adult South African women.

He said the South African Demographic and Health survey of 2016 shows that 16% of women aged 15 – 19 in South Africa have begun childbearing. In this survey, KwaZulu-Natal had the third highest teenage pregnancy rate in the country, at 19,4%.

"What also worries us is that many young sexually-active young women have either not heard of contraceptives, or are not using them."

"Unplanned pregnancies, not only have an impact on a woman's health, but also on her future socio-economic status and general well-being. The present choices that women make not only impact on their own lives, but also on the future well-being and prosperity of the nation."

"Our common goal is to ensure that fewer and fewer young women face the responsibilities of parenthood before they have completed their own education, have found a decent income and, are in a position to raise their children in the relative security of adulthood."

He added that young men and women have shared responsibilities, and that society needs to debunk the common misconception that reproductive rights are synonymous with women's health.

"In fact, reproductive health encompasses the role of men and women, as well as the community; human rights, and social justice. I therefore urge men and women to plan for their fertility and pregnancy together."