

MEC Dhlomo welcomes new evidential breath analyser alcohol tester; says fewer road crashes would ease pressure on the public healthcare system; says fewer road crashes would ease pressure on the public healthcare system

08 April 2019

KwaZulu-Natal Health MEC Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo is confident that a new system that immediately determines the blood-alcohol level in a motorist's body will see fewer hospital admissions and deaths due to road crashes caused by drunken driving.

The brand-new Evidential Breath Alcotest (EBAT) issues the blood-alcohol results immediately, eliminating the need for a blood sample to be sent for analysis by a district surgeon, which could take up to six months due to backlogs. The system was introduced by national Transport Minister Dr Blade Nzimande during the launch of the Easter holiday road safety programme in Pietermaritzburg today.

According to the Department of Transport, the device takes into account gender and age, and prints the results on thermal paper which lasts seven years.

MEC Dhlomo says that injuries and deaths due to alcohol-fuelled road crashes eat into the province's limited health budget. He is hoping the EBAT system this will deter motorists from driving under the influence of alcohol, and help save human and financial resources.

"Listening to the plan by Transport Minister Dr Blade Nzimande was heartwarming... That they'll do everything possible to decrease and curb injuries on the roads through accidents, and that their main targets is people who drive while drunk. I'd wish that as the Department of Health we'd create a baseline, especially in KwaZulu-Natal being a tourist attraction, to gauge its impact before and after its implementation. Right now we see so many people admitted in our hospitals due to accidents on the road that are related to drinking and driving. And some of those casualties end up in our forensic mortuaries. And yes indeed, test results do confirm the presence of alcohol in the system of those who are affected. We'd want to commend the Department and say we'll support this. The pathophysiology of alcohol is such that it goes into the nerves and impairs the functioning of some nerves, making them numb and unable to be sharply responsive to situations on the road. And therefore they make people to be less able to make judgement, such as the distance of other vehicles from them. "It's going to be a huge success comparing the before and after the intervention of this big plan. I hope this is going to be a deterrent, and I'm looking forward to reduced pressure on the healthcare system due to this."



MEC Dhlomo is seen preaching the gospel of road safety

