

# Second baby found alive after being dumped: MEC Dhlomo urges parents to encourage their children to use contraceptives; consider bringing in unwanted babies for adoption

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The time has come for society to stop being in denial that children do have sex, and therefore need to be encouraged to use birth control pills, injections, implants and condoms – which are all free of charge - if they cannot abstain. It is also high time that women who are pregnant approached healthcare professionals and social workers about putting their unwanted babies up for adoption, instead of dumping them in garbage bins and storm water drains

This is the strong message from KwaZulu-Natal Health MEC Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo, following the shock discovery of a live six-day old infant who dumped in the province this week. This latest baby had been stuffed into a pillow case which was then tied up and thrown into potentially hazardous medical waste bin inside King Edward VIII Hospital.

The baby had been born at 8 months, weighing 1,2kg and was being fed through an intravenous tube. He was being kept in an incubator in the hospital's nursery to receive antibiotics and bide his time for weight gain. It is alleged that on the night of Thursday, 14 February 2019, the baby's 20 year-old mother, from KwaMashu, had been breastfeeding him in the nursery. While the nurse had gone into the neighbouring ward, the mother allegedly wrapped him up in linen saver, put him inside the pillow, tied it up, and threw him into bin. She allegedly placed pieces of paper on top to conceal the pillow and closed the bin.

When the nurse returned and discovered that the baby had gone missing, she asked the mother about his whereabouts, and she pleaded ignorance. The nurse then sounded the alarm bell and a frantic search for the baby began. According to Sister Makhosazana Hlophe, the nurses looked for the baby under hospital beds, over the windows, and even pulled up the linen from other patients hospital beds.

The pillow containing him was eventually found in a medical waste bin. The tiny baby had signs of suffocation, but was still breathing. A doctor was immediately called to resuscitate the him. Nurses who were on duty at the time said that the bin could have contained anything from used needles, blood or human tissue. The bin had been due to be thrown away the next day, along with other medical waste, for eventual incineration.

The baby's mother has since been arrested in connection with the incident, and is due to appear in court on Monday. This latest incident occurred just three days after another infant was rescued from inside a storm water drain in Newlands East.



MEC Dhlomo has thanked the nursing staff of King Edward VIII Hospital - who begin each shift with a prayer – for rallying together and leaving no stone unturned when searching for the baby. The MEC says, however, that the situation whereby unwanted babies are being dumped cannot be allowed to continue. He is therefore calling for frank and honest discussion involving parents, guardians and their children, about sex and reproductive health.

*“This is the second incident in one week in the same province. We are happy that both babies are alive. From the little history that we have, this 20 year-old mother – who has another child - had received a clear message from her boyfriend and from her father that she should not come back with the baby. We want to alert such citizens that there will always be support from government in the form of contraceptives; safe termination of pregnancy if it’s still early enough; or putting the unwanted baby up for adoption”.*

*“These incidents that we are seeing mean that we need to strengthen awareness about the numerous contraception options that are available. Women should not be falling pregnant when they don’t want to, so that they do not find themselves in such situations. They must come forward so that we can assist them. If a mistake happens and someone falls pregnant, government will take that baby and put them in adoption programmes. So, such things should not be happening. Now, the mother of this baby is in police custody, and she’s unlikely to ever see her baby again.*

*“We also want to appeal to parents to speak to their children about delaying their sexual debut. Children need to be encouraged to use condoms and know that there is something called birth control through the contraceptives and condoms that we offer free of charge. If we do not speak to our children as parents, they will get the wrong advice from elsewhere.”*