

Youngster (21) pleasantly surprised to get circumcised by MEC Dhlomo; urges other youth to get circumcised and practise safe sex (Community Health Centre in Jozini gets a new name)

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Philani Thabethe (21) woke up this morning with one thing on his mind: to finally get medically circumcised. But a pleasant surprise awaited him when he arrived at Othobothini Community Health Centre in Jozini: he found KZN Health MEC waiting to personally circumcise him. The MEC had been attending the Department's "Pap Drive", which promotes the early detection of cancer through screening and testing. Yesterday, the MEC attended a meeting at the newly-built R250 million health facility, where "Othobothini" – the name of a local village - was unanimously adopted by the community as its new name.

KwaZulu-Natal has circumcised more than 1 million men, since the practice of medical male circumcision was revived by King Goodwill Zwelithini in 2009. While waiting to collect his painkillers, Thabethe said: *"The circumcision went very well. I did not know the MEC was going to be there, so it was a pleasant surprise. I would like to encourage other young people to do it, because when you're circumcised you're protected from HIV infections and STIs. I urge those those who are not yet circumcised to do so, and for those who are circumcised to continue using condoms."*

Thabethe said he was pleased that Government had built a state-of-the-art facility such as this, to improve the quality of – and access to – healthcare. MEC Dhlomo congratulated the young man for deciding to get circumcised.

He said he was pleased that the name of the health facility, which came from the local Nyawo kingship and from the Jozini Local Municipality, was welcomed by the community. The facility, with a comprehensive package of services, will be officially opened within the next two weeks.

