

Speech by MEC Neliswa Peggy Nkonyeni on the launch of the  
Kokstad Roadside Wellness Centre

20 July 06

We have long stated that a fight against the spread of HIV and AIDS should not be left on the shoulders of the Government alone. We are thankful that today and hopefully for tomorrow; we now have found permanent partners that are saying yes it is our obligation to produce an AIDS FREE GENERATION.

We thankful indeed, your contribution in this regard show that you are capitalists with a human heart.

Ladies and gentlemen, during the past decades HIV has entered our consciousness as an incomprehensible calamity. It has already taken a terrible human toll, laying claim to millions of lives, inflicting pain and grief, causing fear, uncertainty and threatening economic devastation.

I find it appropriate that this afternoon we report to you, as our partners, what we, as government, are doing to fight the spread of this scourge. It becomes practical to offer assistance when you know exactly what the person in distress want. In accordance with the **Comprehensive HIV and AIDS Care, Management and Treatment Plan** this is what we are doing: We have;

- Rolled out of Voluntary Counselling and Testing to all our health institutions as well as 50 non-medical sites
- Rolled out of Prevention of Mother To Child Transmissions to all our institutions with maternal services

- Strengthening HIV-infection prevention initiatives by increasing awareness and condom distribution
- Providing nutritional supplement to all HIV positive people under our care.
- Treating sexually transmitted diseases in all our institutions—free of charge to those who cannot afford.
- Providing drugs to all victims of sexual violence.
- Rollout the provision of ARV treatment to all accredited institutions, 55 hospitals and 5 Community Health centres.
- In collaboration with the Nelson Mandela School of Medicine, we are training and working together with Traditional Healers to curb the spread of HIV. It's a fact; people do make use of African Traditional Medicine.
- Most importantly, we are operating 3 functioning **Truck-Stop wellness centres** in this province. Through your unselfish and long-sighted vision, this afternoon, we are opening this forth one.

Ladies and gentlemen we can shy away from the fact that people whose jobs require them to travel a lot, such as truckers, traders, and army personnel are extremely vulnerable to HIV and Sexually Transmitted Infections. It is in centres like this one that families and loved ones of the truck drivers can pin their hopes and say, no matter the temptations on the road, our member is going to come back home free of sicknesses and more enlightened about this disease.

As a Department, we will do all we can in taking care of the personnel required in this centre. We will also unreservedly

support the objectives of this project in its endeavours to increase HIV and AIDS awareness among truckers and their occasional sexual partners. We will also make it our responsibility to ensure a constant adequate supply of condoms, Aids Awareness material as well as medication for opportunistic diseases.

Ladies and gentlemen, fellow combatants in the war against HIV and AIDS, it is at this juncture that I take my hat off for all the parties that have contributed in the realisation of this project.

Our sincere appreciation to **Mr Tim Steel**, we are saying let your company, **TNT**, grow to dizzy heights so that you may be able to provide us with more Roadside Wellness Centres. Truly speaking, we need one at Mkuze.

We are also indebted to **Ikaheng HR Services** for the hard work that see us converging here this evening receiving this necessary project.

To Mr Joe Letswalo, the CEO of the **National Bargaining Council for the Road and Freight Industry** –we are saying keep up the good work.

Let us all remember that our mission is to create an AIDS free generation. It is attainable, as **Walt Disney**:

*'All our dreams can true true,*

*if we have courage to persue them.'*

I thank you.