

Keynote address by KZN Health MEC, Ms Neliswa Nkonyeni on the occasion of the candlelight memorial in Pietermaritzburg

18 May 08

MEC for Social Welfare and Population Development, Dr Meshack Radebe

Members of Provincial Parliament

District and Municipal Mayors

Councilors present

Amakhosi

Traditional Health practitioners

Abefundisi

Committed government professionals and employees from all Departments

Malunga omphakathi ahloniphekile

Njengaloku kungusuku lomthandazo namhlanje sikhumbula bonke labo asebasishiya ngenxa yegciwane legculazi, ngithi ake sithole amandla encwadini ya **MAHUBO: verse 28, 8---9:**

UJehova ungamandla abantu bakhe; uyinqaba yensindiso yocitshiweyo wakhe.

Sindisa abantu bakho, ubaluse, ubathwale kuze kube phakade.

Namhlanje masikhumbuzane ukuthi sekuphele iminyaka engu 25 seloku kwaqala lesisifo esesithathe imiphefumulo yezigidi zabantu

umhlaba uphela kodwa kungekho namathemba okutholakala kwekhambi laso.

HIV and AIDS is a not just a disease but it is a socioeconomic issue. 25 years later, **5.5 million people are living with HIV in South Africa and over 1.5 million of those live in KwaZulu Natal.**

Bathandwa beNkosi losuku lwe International AIDS Candlelight Memorial masazi ukuthi luphakamiswe ukuthi lufeze izimfuno ezintathu:

- to honour the memory of those lost to HIV and AIDS,
- show support for those living with HIV and AIDS,
- raise awareness of HIV and AIDS, and mobilize community involvement in the fight against this disease.

Kulonyaka odlule silihloniphile futhi lelilanga siphakamisa isihloko esithi: *“Lighting the Path to a Brighter Future*

The theme for this year is **STOP HIV AND AIDS.....NEVER GIVE UP.**

Kulonyaka sithi imithandazo yethu masiyibhekise kubasebenzi bakahulumeni ngoba izibalo ziyakhombisa ukuthi kuyo yonke iminyango, abasebenzi bethu nabo bayaphela.

We proposed this attention to our workers because HIV has already taken a terrible human toll, laying claim to millions of lives, inflicting pain and grief, causing fear, uncertainty and threatening economic devastation.

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 to more than 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,
- 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 4 functioning **Truck-Stop wellness centres** in this province.

To all our health care workers –we are saying keep up the good work.

We are also saying this good work cannot be achieved if we as leading lights have health and social problems of our own. In addressing some of the pressures that our people are confronted with, we have put emphasis on the welfare of our staff as we **view our employees as our most valuable asset.**

Kuloluhlangothi, namhlanje siyanigxusa nonke ukuthi nisebenzise izinhlaka ze **Employee Assistance Programmes**, ezisekwe kuyo yonke iminyango. Sithi ungathuli, sithi ungabhekane nezinkinga uwedwa, sebenzisa lolusizo ukusombulula noma yini obhekane nayo ikakhulukazi kulezizimo ezifaka:

- **Alcohol and drug abuse.**
- **Emotional problems**
- **Interpersonal relationships**
- **Marital difficulties**
- **Health problems including HIV and AIDS**
- **Family and children difficulties**
- **Finances and or budgeting**

Makusicacele ukuthi lolusizo luyaqinisekisa imfihlo ngokudaluliwe nanokuthi participation is **voluntary, and that consultation with the practitioners is free.**

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

*'All our dreams can true true,
if we have courage to persue them.'*

Programme Director, enye into engasisiza kakhulu ukulwisana nalombulalazwe, wudaba lokuba kubanjiswane kubantu abathandanayo uma kulashwa izifo zocansi. I am referring here to the issue of partner notification. Akusizi ngempela ukuthi kuze phambili abntu besifazane bezolashwa kodwa amadoda ahlale emakhaya ngoba kusho ukuthi ukufa kuzohlala kubuya noma kubhebhethেকে phambili. .

Okunye esikuphakamisayo emkhankasweni wethu wokulwisana nokubhebhetheka kwalegculazi ikakhulukazi kulabo abasebasha, sithi: We want to work with you as enlightened youth to

- Increase public knowledge about the symptoms and management of all STIs,
- Reinforce consistent and correct condom use
- Encouragement of partner notification. *Uthathe lona othandana naye uma uyalashelwa izifo zocansi.*

- Increase intention to access treatment and adherence to prescribed treatment.
- Be encouraged to make use of our clinics for normal check-ups and for any ailments that afflict you.

Umyalezo omkhulu uthi *'the responsibility for our private health really rests with us as individuals.'*

Singabahlali masiqikelele ukuthi labo abaphila negciwane phakathi kwethu ababandlululwa. Stop the stigma.

Kuwo yonke imindeni elahlekelwe izihlobo zayo ngalesisifo sithi mayingalahli ithemba.

Kubasebenzi bethu sithi mabasebenzise izinhlaka ezisekelwe ukubasiza. Kanti kubantwana bethu, sithi, MABAZITHANDE. Delay sexual debut.

STOP HIV AND AIDS...NEVER GIVE UP.

I thank you.