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NEWS

Information for better health ...

JANUARY–JUNE 2025

ULTRASOUND SERVICES ARE NOW AVAILABLE AT ALL CLINICS



Appelsbosch mobile clinic 2, the only mobile clinic within the District that can now do ultrasound services

In celebration of International Midwives Day, which took place on 5 May 2025, uMgungundlovu highlights a vital achievement. Ultrasound services for pregnant women are now available at all clinics within the uMgungundlovu District. This is an essential service which forms a vital part of a healthy pregnancy as it helps to identify the health of the baby whilst its still inside the womb.

This achievement comes as a welcome relief for pregnant women and their families within the district.

Full story on page 2 & 3

WILLOWFONTEIN CLINIC'S FAMILY HEALTH DAY



Children enjoyed jumping castles and other fun activities

On 27 July 2025, there was a successful launch of 3 Phila

Mntwana Centres

under Willowfontein Clinic. The day also combined a commemoration for Family Health and an Open Day where the clinic addressed the community about the services they offer and how to access them.

Full story on page 9

JUNE IS MEN'S HEALTH MONTH

All men are reminded that June is a month to commemorate men's health. This means that all men (young, adults and the elderly) are encouraged to take better care of their health. Not only for the month of June, but to use June as the month to start. The World Health Organisation recognises that men's health is a global issue that contributes to a general shorter life expectation for men. Men, please take charge and do the ff:

- Live a healthy lifestyle, including eating healthy food and regular exercise.
- Visit your nearest health facility for normal check-ups like diabetes, HIV, TB, Hypertension, prostate cancer
- Do regular self-examinations to detect testicular cancer early signs.
- Avoid excessive consumption of alcohol.
- Stay away from drugs and tobacco smoking.

PREGNANT WOMEN CAN BREATHE A SIGH OF RELIEF SINCE THEY ARE NOW ABLE TO GET ULTRASOUND SERVICES AT CLINICS



A pregnant client enjoying the ultrasound services from a qualified midwife nurse in Pata Clinic,

Pregnant women in uMgungundlovu District, especially across rural communities can now access vital ultrasound services directly at their local clinics, marking a major milestone in improving maternal healthcare in the province of KwaZulu-Natal.

This development follows the rollout of ultrasound services to all Primary Health Care (PHC) facilities in this district — previously only available at hospitals and Community Health Centres (CHCs).

The change comes as a relief to expectant mothers who previously faced challenges including long-distance referrals, delayed appointments, and out-of-pocket expenses from private providers.

These challenges were exacerbated in rural communities like Impendle, Msunduzi-Vulindlela, uMshwati, Richmond, Mkhambathini, and Mooi Mpofana.

uMgungundlovu has been selected as a pilot district for this type of initiative in KwaZulu-Natal.

Ahead of the rollout, selected midwives received specialised training to provide point-of-care ultrasound services. Midwives play a critical role in maternal health, providing services related to antenatal, labour, postnatal, and newborn care.

Before this initiative, pregnant women had to be referred to distant hospitals or CHCs, often facing delayed appointments and transportation costs. The new model brings services to the point of need, reducing these barriers and ensuring more timely care.

Appelsbosch Mobile Clinic, which amongst other areas serves Mpolweni, a rural area in the uMshwati Municipality, is currently the only mobile unit offering this service. Ms Thobile Hadebe from uMgungundlovu District, visited the area to survey the levels of satisfaction from clients.

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PREGNANT WOMEN CAN BREATHE A SIGH OF RELIEF SINCE THEY ARE NOW ABLE TO GET ULTRASOUND SERVICES AT CLINICS

31-week pregnant Samukelisiwe Ndawonde, a client at Mpolweni Mobile Clinic shared her experience. "With my first pregnancy, I had to go to a private doctor for a scan, and it was costly. They didn't even check my blood pressure or do urine tests like Sister Sokhela does here," she said.

"Sister Sokhela is amazing—she's always cheerful and treats us with care." Miss Ndawonde concluded by saying that she had a deep appreciation for the convenience and quality of care they now receive closer to home.

Sr Khanyisile Sokhela, the midwife operating the mobile ultrasound service at Mpolweni, acknowledged a few ongoing challenges, such as limited internet connectivity and staff shortages during her absence. Nonetheless, she said the service is well-received and is making a positive impact on maternal health in the area.

Sr Sokhela has more than 10 years of service as a qualified midwife. She said this service is a step towards safer pregnancies because if there are pregnancy abnormalities; they will be detected early and referred

accordingly. The scans also make it possible to identify multiple pregnancies and this has happened in some clinics within uMgungundlovu. Some midwives are even able to detect the unborn baby's gender.

Health officials hope this initiative will encourage more women to seek antenatal care early in pregnancy. They are also calling on partners and fathers to become more involved in supporting maternal healthcare by accompanying their loved ones to clinic visits.



Photo 1: At Mpolweni Mobile Clinic Point; Samukelisiwe Ndawonde was happy to receive ultrasound services near her home. Services provided by Sister Khanyisile Sokhela



Photo 2: The mobile device utilized for ultrasound is user-friendly and most of all portable.

DEPUTY MINISTER OF HEALTH JOE PHAHLA VISITED HEALTH FACILITIES IN UMNGENI SUB-DISTRICT AFTER AN OFFICIAL NATIONAL APPOINTMENT TO OVERSEE THEIR FUNCTIONALITY

Deputy Health Minister Dr Joe Phaahla visited two health facilities in uMngeni Sub District. The oversight visit, part of his parliamentary constituency responsibilities, included a tour of both Mpophomeni Clinic and Umngeni Psychiatric Hospital. Part of the stakeholders who were present included management team from the Provincial Health Office, the District Office, Northdale Hospital, local councillors, and the Umngeni hospital board chairperson. Mr Thulani Mthlane, a councillor from uMngeni Municipality led the proceedings and welcomed the deputy minister's visit, noting it followed repeated community requests for government attention.

Dr. Phaahla, who operates a parliamentary office in Howick, committed to advocating for better healthcare infrastructure and improved service delivery in the region. In his address, he expressed concerns over the Mpophomeni clinic's small infrastructure. Serving around 300 patients daily, the clinic is struggling to meet demand due to limited space and outdated infrastructure.

The infrastructure was built many decades ago, whilst the community was still small. Now the community has grown, new houses, major developments and a shopping centre in area contributed to the increase in the population.

Despite these conditions, Dr Paahla praised and commended the staff's dedication towards their duties and for maintaining a well-run clinic under pressure. He cited infrastructural limitations and administrative delays, such as slow record retrieval, as major contributors to long wait times.

At Umngeni Psychiatric Hospital, the officials briefed him on the facility's operations and specific challenges. In response, Phaahla reaffirmed the national health department's commitment to strengthening healthcare services and infrastructure across the area.

"We're hopeful that, having seen the conditions for himself, the deputy minister will provide the necessary support," Mthlane said. "Our aim in bringing him here is to ensure residents of Mpophomeni and surrounding communities receive the quality healthcare they deserve."



During his walkabout with clinic management, Dr Joe Phaahla interacted with patients and was shown how the lack of space disrupts patient flow and hampers service delivery.

WILLOWFONTEIN CLINIC CHILD AND ADOLESCENT FAMILY CARE DAY, PHILA MNTWANA LAUNCH & FACILITY OPEN DAY



Some of the attendees at the local community hall

On the 27th of June 2025, Willowfontein Clinic hosted a Child and Adolescent Family Care Day, which included the launch of three (3) Philamntwana Centres and a Facility Open Day at the Willowfontein Sports Ground. Well run Phila Mntwana Centres help to improve the health and well-being of children in local areas by providing health promotion and disease prevention services.

The event aimed to promote child health, increase access to services, engage the community through sport and wellness activities, and support the U=U campaign (Undetectable =

Untransmittable, a public health initiative focused on the scientific fact that people living with HIV who achieve and maintain an undetectable viral load through consistent antiretroviral therapy (ART) reduces the chances of transmitting the virus to their partners).

The event was supported by stakeholders from the Department of Health including specialists, NGOs, Partners, SAPS, local leaders and influential people.

Health services were delivered via mobile units offering TB screenings, HIV testing,

optometry, dental care, immunisations, and treatment of minor illnesses. Children enjoyed recreational activities, while adults engaged in other sports, exhibitions, and health education; adding to the community spirit.

Key insights included the need for better consent protocols for unaccompanied children, more dental and optometry services, and improved awareness of available clinic services. The event also highlighted the growing need for an additional mobile clinic due to rapid population growth in surrounding areas. These challenges will be addressed and incorporated into the operational plans of the clinic and sub-district.

The event drew a large turnout, strengthened clinic-community relations, and is expected to improve service uptake—particularly for child development and immunisation.

TB screening was the most in-demand service. Visual acuity, optometry consultation and acute health screening were other services that were in demand on the day.

COMMEMORATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS DAY INVOLVED ENGAGING STAFF MEMBERS ABOUT CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS

Every year on March 21st, South Africa observes Human Rights Day — a significant national holiday that serves both as a commemoration of the country's painful past and a celebration of the progress made in securing human rights for all citizens.

After the end of apartheid, the newly democratic government declared March 21 as Human Rights Day to honour the 69 people who lost their lives

during the Sharpeville Massacre on March 21, 1960 and to promote a culture of human rights in line with the values enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, one of the most progressive in the world.

This year, the whole country celebrated Human Rights Day by hosting various ceremonies, educational programs, and community gatherings. uMgungundlovu District held an employee engagement

programme focusing on South African Constitutional human rights.

On 20 March 2025, the uMgungundlovu Health District was visited by Chapter 9 organisations with an aim to engage with employees about Constitutional Human Rights, what are their implications; and how can employees contribute to the recognition of these rights.

Employees from different health facilities were part of the 4 hour session.

During the employee engagement, awareness focused on constitutional rights, social justice, and the importance of civic engagement.

Discussions focused on ongoing issues such as poverty, inequality, gender-based violence, and xenophobia — emphasizing that the fight for human rights is ongoing.



Some of the audience members at the Human Rights employee engagement programme

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COMMEMORATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS DAY INVOLVED ENGAGING STAFF MEMBERS ABOUT CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS

For the staff members, the importance of first knowing your rights as a citizen and the rights of the people you serve was highlighted.

Other subjects that were discussed were the high number of Medico-legal claims for the Department of Health and how the behaviour of individual staff members can contribute to this.

Focus was also on the KZN Department of Health's brand and image, The Constitution of South Africa, Human Rights, KZN DOH Media Policy, the Code of Conduct for public servants, Image & Reputation including Social Media behaviour, POPI Act and Photography law (Protection of privacy), Patient Rights Charter, Batho Pele Principles, and the basics of professionalism.

The sessions also involved educational topics and examples of news and trending topics.

Human Rights Day is not just a tribute to the past; it is a call to action for the present and the future.



Photo 1, 2,3: Some of the ladies who visited uMgungundlovu District from the Chapter 9 institutions

- 1: A Janakk—From the Public Protector's office,
- 2: T Gumede—From the Commission for Gender Equality
- 3: T Magwanya—From the South African Human Rights Commission

Photo 4: Mr Mlungisi Ndlovu from GCIS helped with organizing the team and was the programme director

WORLD OBESITY COMMEMORATION, STUDENTS URGED TO TAKE PRACTICAL STEPS AGAINST UNHEALTHY WEIGHT GAIN



PIC 1: The school's hall was full with pupils, officials, school governance stakeholders, other stakeholders who play a critical role on nutrition



PIC 2: Officials from the department of agriculture demonstrating basic gardening skills to the learners

On Friday, 07 March 2025, the Deputy Minister of Basic Education, Dr Reginah Mhaule, and KZN Education MEC Siphso Hlomuka commemorated World obesity day 2025 at Northbury Park Secondary School in Pietermaritzburg.

uMgungundlovu Health District and nearby health facilities represented the Department of Health, working with attendees (mainly Northbury Park students) to measure their health statuses by doing different health checks including Body Mass Index (BMI).

According to World Health Organisation (WHO) a BMI is a measurement of a person's weight against their height. Go to the internet to find online BMI calculators. A healthy BMI should be according to the following table:

- 18.5 = Underweight
- 18.5 to 24.9 = Healthy
- 25 to 29.9 = Overweight
- 30 or higher = Obese

The above table is a guideline for ordinary citizens. There are exceptions that do not apply

such as sports/athletic people because of their body-fat-ratio. This year, youth involvement was a cornerstone of the campaign in South Africa. Learners of school going age are the most vulnerable group.

Alarming, the country is facing escalating numbers of overweight or obesity individuals including children under the age of five who are also overweight. It is proven that obesity can contribute to non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as diabetes, hypertension, cardiovascular illnesses and certain cancers. Some of these diseases can be prevented by practicing a healthy lifestyle which involves eating healthy food, exercising, avoiding over consumption of processed food like sugar, flour, etc. Replace soda and juices with clean water and herbal tea, etc. In the event, the scholars were encouraged to do gardening so they can eat natural, organic, nutritious food. There were gardening demonstrations. Fun physical activities involved a Fun-walk, Netball, Soccer, and various physical activities like playing hoola hoop, skipping rope etc

THE MEC FOR HEALTH TOGETHER WITH THE MEC FOR TRANSPORT AND HUMAN SETTLEMENT HAD AN IMBIZO AT MPOFANA , NYAMVUBU AREA

On the 9th of May 2025, the MEC for Health, Ms Nomagugu Simelane and the MEC for Transport and Human Settlements, Mr Siboniso Duma held an Imbizo initiative at the Mpofoana Local Municipality (Nyavubu Sport field at Ward 04). The event part of the “Isibhedlela kubantu” (Hospital to the people) program, aimed to bring healthcare services directly to the community.

Both the MEC’s joined forces to serve Mpofoana Community, they led the day’s activities and engaged with residents in addressing local concerns. The activities started with household visits. Present were different stakeholders, which included members of the Executive Council, Local Mayor, Head of Departments, Amakhosi, Izinduna, NGOs, District health officials and health professionals.

The aim was to bring essential service delivery directly to the people, especially at the area of Nyamvubu as they are a rural community that is away from

major developments. The programme ensures that residents have easy access to healthcare facilities, including receiving immediate medical attention like health/vitals screenings, consultations and treatments.

Through the Imbizo, the MEC for Transport and Human Settlements, addressed that they are aware of the social ills faced by the community and they are currently working towards bettering the lives of people of Mpofoana Municipality.

MEC Duma highlighted that there's more than R177 million invested for road construction. P14 road is currently being built and multi millions of rands were spent building the road. P174 bridge and D55 bridge was promised to be built and it will cost R30 million to do it. There are plans to build RDP houses in the area which will cost more than R100 million rands.

The MEC for Health, Ms Nomagugu Simelane was thrilled to announce isibhedlela kubantu

as it brings services normally available at hospital level to the community. Screening and treatment for variety of ailments at various stations was available at the event. Services included screening and treatment for TB, HIV, diabetes, hypertension, dental health and eye care services including provision of glasses, provision of walking aid like walking sticks, some even received wheelchairs. Cervical cancer screening, social services, voluntary medical male circumcision were also provided.

She said: “Isibhedlela kubantu is our way of showing you that we care. Through this initiative, our District supporting partners drive in with their mobile units to help us give you the very best of healthcare services.”

Ms Simelane advised the attendants to prioritise their health by eating healthy food, exercising, drinking clean water, practicing safer sex and more. “Zinakekele, Impilo ingeyakho, masibambisane noHulumeni” concluded MEC Simelane



THE MEC FOR HEALTH TOGETHER WITH THE MEC FOR TRANSPORT AND HUMAN SETTLEMENT HAD AN IMBIZO AT MPOFANA , NYAMVUBU AREA



PIC 1: Recipients of wheelchairs were happy to be mobile again

PIC 2: Eyecare services are always in high demand at community events as you can tell by the line of people excited for their examinations

PIC 3: MEC Simelane and MEC Duma accompanied by District Management and local stakeholders when they visited health service areas

PIC 4: MEC Duma promising that more developments are in the pipeline

PIC 5: MEC Simelane reminding people that "health is wealth"; meaning that without good health, one's ability to enjoy life, pursue goals and accumulate wealth is significantly decreased

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

uMgungundlovu District

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