



# IMPILO ENGCONO

# NEWS

Information for better health ...

JANUARY–MARCH 2021

## WORLD TB DAY

**“THE CLOCK IS TICKING: LET’S FIND, TREAT AND END TB NOW!”**



**uMgungundlovu District’s World TB Day commemoration**

On the 30th of March 2021, uMgungundlovu District commemorated World Tuberculosis (TB) day. The commemoration event was held at Caluza Hall under the theme “The clock is ticking: let’s find, treat and end TB now”. TB is a global epidemic and therefore a global concern.

The event was centered around discussions on what should be

the focus of staff members who are central to the tracing, diagnosis, and treatment of TB at a community level and workplaces.

The staff categories who attended the event included TB nurses, Infection Prevention and Control, and Occupational Health and Safety nurses. They were reminded that TB infections are still high in the KwaZulu-Natal Province and uMgungundlovu District. There is always room for improvement. Active health promotion, involvement of community members and key community leaders was emphasized as the main

ingredient towards the fight against TB at the community level.

Occupational Health Nurses were reminded that staff members are not immune to TB infections. They are the most vulnerable because they deal daily with TB-infected individuals daily. There was a short remembrance of those employees and community members who died because of TB.

Whilst the event was going on at Caluza Hall, uMgungundlovu; the attendants were able to digitally connect and listen to the KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) Health MEC Ms. Nomagugu Simelane-Zulu whilst she was addressing other attendants at the main TB commemoration event for the province of KZN held at Stanger in Ilembe District.



# ONE YEAR OF COVID-19 IN SOUTH AFRICA

It has been a tough year for everyone ... Reflecting on the year that introduced Covid –19 to the nation.

On Friday 5 March 2021 at Grey's Tertiary Hospital, the National Minister of Health, Dr. Zweli Mkhize, the MEC for KwaZulu-Natal Health Ms. Nomagugu Simelane-Zulu and the KwaZulu-Natal Premier, Mr. Sihle Zikalala commemorated one year since the discovery of a patient with the covid-19 virus in South Africa.

The country was hit with panic on 5 March 2020, when the National Minister of Health announced that a person who resided in the KwaZulu-Natal Province, at the Hilton area was diagnosed with Covid-19. This was the first person to be diagnosed with the virus in South Africa, he was soon known as Patient Zero. MEC Simelane-Zulu stated that the department had started preparations for covid-19 in January 2020. But when the first case was announced on 5 March 2020, the MEC remembered that they realized more hard work was needed. "We cannot say thank you

enough to Health Care Workers, we see the pressure you are under and appreciate every effort you make," said the health MEC complimenting Health Care Workers.

Staff members from other KZN districts also shared their experiences in the past year of how the health care industry was changed by the covid-19 pandemic. One of those was Dr. Bradley Naidoo who works at the Internal Medicine department of Grey's Tertiary Hospital, one of the few hospitals in the KZN province that were allocated to admit covid-19 positive patients and the only hospital in the uMgungundlovu district at the time. He and 2 other senior doctors and nursing staff were the ones who admitted Patient Zero. They were relieved that he seemed very well and was not sick. Dr. Naidoo remembered how worried he and his colleagues were when they received a call



Dr. Bradley Naidoo from Grey's Hospital remembers the atmosphere when they received the call that Patient Zero was on his way to the hospital for admission

that a patient was on his way for admission. "We wondered how sick he was, our ability to care for him, our safety and that of our families". "I was thankful for the preparations that we had gone through prior to the event, the training and orientation programmes, the meetings". "every category of staff is important during a pandemic as they all have a role to play; porters, cleaners, Emergency Medical Services, doctors, nurses, respiratory radiographers and more all play a critical role" concluded Dr. Naidoo. The audience could tell that this was a special moment he would never forget in his life and career.

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# ONE YEAR OF COVID-19 IN SOUTH AFRICA

It has been a tough year for everyone ... Reflecting on the year that introduced Covid -19 to the Nation.

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**D**uring an event on 5 March 2021, a commemoration of one year since the discovery of Covid-19 in South Africa; The Premier of KwaZulu-Natal Mr Sihle Zikalala mentioned that a lot of arrangements had to be done to prepare for the devastation of the pandemic.

These included the employment of contract health care workers, the establishment of field hospitals, provision of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), and robust community engagement strategies. All government departments, not only the Department of Health had to prepare and be actively involved in the fight against the pandemic.

The private sector and business sector had to be incorporated into the strategies as well and they all played a critical role.

**M**inister of Health, Dr. Zweli Mkhize said “the whole journey has been rough, in the process we have learned a lot, made mistakes, and achieved a

lot”. Dr. Mkhize thanked all sectors who supported and cooperated with the government’s interventions like the Lockdown. “Implementation of the lockdown was the hardest and painful decision that had to be done to save people and prepare health facilities” “Every person and industry (taxi industries, religious sector,

restaurants, alcohol and tobacco, sports fraternity, etc) is appreciated,” concluded the Minister.

The Health Care Workers were reminded that the vaccination campaign is now on. Although challenges were experienced, all were asked to be patient and take the jab when their turn comes.



Health Minister Dr. Zweli Mkhize addressing Health Care Workers on what the past year has meant to the world and South Africa



On 5 March, Health Care Workers remembered all workers who died due to Covid-19

# UMGUNGUNDLOVU LAUNCHES THE COVID-19 VACCINE ROLL-OUT PROGRAMME

UMgungundlovu District launched the covid-19 vaccine roll-out programme on 2 March 2021 at Edendale Hospital.

This launch followed in the footsteps of the KwaZulu-Natal Premier Sihle Zikalala who officially unveiled the COVID-19 vaccine rollout programme in the province on Thursday 18 February in Durban. Edendale Hospital was identified as a central vaccination site for uMgungundlovu district during the initial stages of phase 1 of the vaccine programme. All health care workers around the district took turns to get their vaccines at this site. The initial stage of the vaccine programme focused on frontline workers who are Health Care Workers as they are at the forefront of the pandemic and at a greater risk of infection.

## COVID-19 PHASES

The covid-19 vaccine roll-out programme is implemented in phases due to amongst other things, the limited number of vaccines that the country is receiving, the high number of

residents to be vaccinated, economic factors, and other logistics that are complicating the total roll-out of the programme at once.

The following phases were created and adopted for the South African population.

**Phase 1:** The country's estimated 1.2 million frontline healthcare workers will be vaccinated.

**Phase 2:** Essential workers, persons in congregate settings, persons over 60-years, and persons over 18-years with co-morbidities will be second groups to receive the vaccine.

**Phase 3:** The final phase of the vaccine will target 22,5 million members of the population over the age of 18-years. The initial aim was to vaccinate 67% of the population by the end of 2021 to achieve herd



The Minister of Health and KZN MEC for Health visited the Edendale Hospital's Covid-19 vaccination site

immunity. Some unforeseen circumstances with the National programme have led to predictions that the programme will run into the year 2022.

Districts are required to have vaccination sites set up throughout different areas where individuals will receive their jobs. Before these vaccine sites are set up and approved, a lot of preparations take place. The site must meet all standards set. A place and equipment to register those to be vaccinated, an open area where the vaccines will take place, marshalling, refrigeration and safety of vaccines, and observation of infection prevention control measures.

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# UMGUNGUNDOLOVU COVID-19 VACCINE ROLL-OUT

**U**Mgungundlovu District launched its vaccination campaign on 2 March 2021. The first staff member to be vaccinated in uMgungundlovu, Ms Dayimane was very happy to receive the Johnson and Johnson vaccine at the Edendale hospital vaccination site. Ms Dayimane works at Edendale hospital as an Operational Manager for a medical ward. She said she and other staff members had been waiting patiently to get vaccinated. When the opportunity came, she volunteered to be the first person. “During the second wave of the virus I saw and experienced the devastation that the virus brought to many lives, at work and privately”. “I feel fine, I don’t have any side-effect from the vaccine” “I encourage everyone to get the vaccine, health care workers are there to give you the information you need,” said Dayimane later that day.

## HEALTH CARE WORKERS ARE VACCINATED FIRST

All categories of staff members

are encouraged to use the online registration portal [vaccine.enroll.health.gov.za](https://vaccine.enroll.health.gov.za) to register to get vaccinated. Once you are registered, you receive confirmation and follow the prompts until you are given a date and venue for your vaccine. Strategies and contingency plans for Phase 2 roll-out are being put in place, closely monitored and edited to accommodate the current or anticipated situations surrounding the vaccines. As the vaccination roll-out programme expands, more vaccine sites are expected to be set up at the facility and community level.

## DON'T BE LEFT OUT, REGISTER FOR VACCINATION

At the current time, everyone who will be vaccinated must register for the vaccine. An online registration system is currently available for public members over 60 years. Citizens who have access to smartphones, laptops, tablets, desktops are requested to assist in the registration of their relatives and neighbours who do not have. As a citizen, once your registration is completed online, you will receive an SMS notifying



Sister Dayimane is the first health care worker to be vaccinated for Covid-19 in uMgungundlovu District

you of your completed registration and further instructions. Health care workers at the community and facility level will also assist with the registration of those who are struggling to register.

## STAY INFORMED, SEEK RELIABLE INFORMATION

The vaccine programme is evolving, citizens are encouraged to look out for updated information on vaccines in their local areas.

## CONTINUE WITH THE NEW NORMAL

Being vaccinated does not mean you will no longer implement the non-pharmaceutical measures of protection against the virus. You are still required to wear your mask, social-distance, avoid crowded places, practice cough etiquette, and observe your health.

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# COVID-19 EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS

Young people are at a higher risk of getting infected with the virus and spreading it without knowledge because they often do not get sick from it.

**T**here was the national extension of school holidays at the beginning of the year due to the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic. The government and related parties ruled that schools would be open on 15 February 2021, for the first term of the South African education calendar.

The opening of schools meant the department of health together with department of education needed to monitor Covid-19 infections closely in areas of learning. Teachers, scholars, and other categories of staff are all at risk of getting infected just like everybody else. But scholars are more vulnerable because sometimes it may be hard for a scholar or a child to stay away from their friends.

To make sure that children and their families remain protected and informed, schools and related stakeholders are required to do the following:

- Provide children/scholars with information about how to protect themselves;

- Promote best handwashing and hygiene practices and provide hygiene supplies;
- Clean and disinfect school buildings, especially water and sanitation facilities;
- Increase airflow and ventilation into classrooms.
- Stagger school attendance to avoid overcrowding of learners
- Place scholar equipment like desks and chairs about 1.5 metres apart

Some schools have experienced outbreaks of the disease. Whenever an outbreak happened, the department of health would follow up with those who tested positive for Covid-19. The follow-ups are also made with those who have been in close contact with the ones who tested positive at school, home, and neighborhood. Parents and caregivers, as well as students themselves, are also encouraged to take the following actions:

- Monitor children's health and keep them at home and away from others if they are ill;
- Encourage children to ask



**Above:** Ms Ntsiki Ralgane giving health education at one of the schools in iMpindle Sub-district after there was an outbreak of Covid amongst learners.

**Insert:** Mr M Ndlovu from GCIS at one of the schools in Edendale area engaging with learners to get their opinions and dispel myths about the virus

questions and express their concerns; and

- Educate and encourage students to become advocates for disease prevention and control at home, in school, and in their community by talking to others about how to prevent the spread of virus.



# PICTURE GALLERY



The above pictures were taken at the TB Commemoration event on 30 March 2021  
**Picture 1:** A memorial candle was lit to remember staff members and community members who died because of TB  
**Picture 2:** Ms T Dlamini from Imbalenhle CHC talking to the audience about infection control and prevention  
**Picture 3:** From left- The District's Public Relations Officer, TB Supervisor and Occupational Health Nurse  
**Picture 4:** Mrs Sindisiwe Mbambo, District Clinical & Programmes Manager reminding the audience how TB poses a threat towards people's livelihood and the economy of the country



The above pictures were taken at Edendale Hospital's Covid-19 vaccination site  
**Picture 5:** The site was prepared days before the actual vaccination began, taking into account lots of logistics  
**Picture 6 & 7:** Happy health care workers during their vaccination and consultation pre-vaccination



# LOOK OUT FOR ...

## THE PHELOPHEPA MOBILE TRAIN HEALTH SERVICES

The Phelophepa healthcare train is coming to town and everyone is invited.

The Phelophepa health train is an initiative of Transnet, which started in 1994 to give free primary health care to the needy in various communities throughout the country.

**Where:** At the Pietermaritzburg Train Station

**When:** 19-23 April 2021 and 26-30 April 2021

### SERVICES AVAILABLE

The train brings primary healthcare services to you. Services like

- health education and advice,
- screening for diabetics,
- Pap smear
- Prostate and breast screening
- Medicine dispensing
- Eye tests, eye drops and glasses
- Counselling /psychology
- Dental screening, extractions, cleaning, fillings
- Most services are free, a few will be

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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