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NEWS

Information for better health ...

JULY–SEPTEMBER 2024

UMGUNGUNDLOVU DISTRICT HELD TWO (2) SEPARATE EVENTS TO CELEBRATE WOMEN DURING WOMENS MONTH



The uMgungundlovu District held two events focusing on women during August 2024, National Women’s Month. Both events had different target audiences and focus, but the aim was for women to gather and support one another regarding all subjects that often affect them.

On 29 August 2024, the Women in the Workplace Forum held an elegant event for all women forum members from different health facilities.

On 30 August 2024, the District Office held its own event with a cancer theme, encouraging staff to dress in pink. This was part of promoting breast cancer awareness.

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Citizens now have unlimited access to products of sexual health. This is after a vending machine was installed and

officially launched in the Imbali area in Pietermaritzburg. Citizens, especially young people who are the main target can now access contraceptives, condoms, pregnancy kits, and HIV test kits on their own time. This is another way the department together with its partners utilising technology to improve access to health.



The Umgungundlovu Health District Office held a joint Heritage Day celebration after many years of holding separate, departmental events to celebrate the day. This year, the combined Heritage Day celebration was full of fun, laughter and cultural diversity. All members enjoyed and vowed that the

next year’s event will be bigger and better.

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DISTRICT HERITAGE DAY EVENT, THE BEAUTY OF DIFFERENT HERITAGES COMING TOGETHER AS ONE

On Friday 20th September 2024, the Umgungundlovu district office celebrated Heritage Day. The National Heritage Day is celebrated annually on 24 September in South Africa. This is a day that recognises and celebrates the cultural wealth of our nation.

South Africans celebrate the day by remembering their cultural heritage. The District Office celebrated Heritage Day to encourage cultural traditions and the diversity of cultures, beliefs, and traditions that make up the nation of South Africa, in this case, the District Office.

Heritage Day was Shaka's Day before the country's first democratic elections. Shaka's day was dedicated to the legendary King of the Zulu nation, King Shaka Zulu.

It was the first time in more than 5 years, that the District Office celebrated. Heritage

Day as one team. Previously it was celebrated per department/component within the office.

This year, it was clear that the togetherness has been missed a lot. All attendees committed and participated in making the day memorable. Different departments within the office teamed up to plan and execute the event. Employees from a variety of cultures and traditions gathered to celebrate what makes them who they are and

best of all, proudly South Africans.

South Africans are known throughout the world for their great music, incredible dancing skills, variety of unique cultures, and traditional food; a great representation of our distinctive heritage.

Groups and individual staff members participated in all fun activities, including a depiction of courting a woman in the Zulu tradition. Traditional food prepared by staff members was served.



Staff members from the Human Resources Department looking beautiful in their traditional attires, the ladies chose to wear phinifoeres, a zulu traditional attire most worn by wives at home but recently made popular and modernized by social media

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HERITAGE DAY PICTURE GALLERY



The event was full of fun, togetherness and entertainment . Staff from different cultures and heritages were all gathered in one event.

Mrs T Mtungwa, the Programme Director did a sterling job in involving everyone as individuals and as components

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KZN HEALTH MEC VISITS UMNGENI HOSPITAL

On 26 September 2024, the KZN MEC for Health Ms Nomagugu Simelane and her team visited uMngeni Hospital to meet with senior management teams from health facilities in Mgungundlovu District. This is part of the MECs strategy of engaging with employees at operational levels. The meeting was chaired by the Head of Health (HOD), Dr S Tshabalala.

The MEC, in her opening remarks, emphasized the following:

- The Department is on a mission to engage its Partners to forge better working relations which will allow for more and

extended assistance and support in certain areas of operation.

- Professionalism is a non-negotiable for all employees. Staff members must always be dressed according to the Departmental dress code guidelines. Wearing of official, visible name tags is a requirement. Politeness, courtesy and professionalism should always be displayed. Rude staff members will not be tolerated.

- CEOs cannot be office-based Managers. Every CEO must accustom themselves to knowing the ins and outs of their facility's operations by doing management by walk-about.

- Senior management must be available to the public on their official cell phones, and have their contact details on display.

The MEC, her team and the management teams from health facilities conducted a walkabout around the uMngeni Hospital. They interacted with patients, staff members and visitors. They also observed the hospital's operations.

An opportunity was given to each hospital CEO to present highlights about their facilities. Most CEOs communicated difficulties with cutting of allocated budgets meaning they had to re-prioritise certain aspects of their operational plans.



The senior management team from uMngeni Hospital lead the MECs delegation during a walk-about. They were taken to different areas and visited patient areas, including wards



WOMEN'S MONTH COMMEMORATION EVENT TO RECOGNISE WOMEN IN THE WORKPLACE FORUMS

UMgungundlovu District Office is on a mission to recognise women in the workplace. Acknowledge them and appreciate the work that they do daily while facing the challenges that are unique to them.

On 28 September 2023, the District established a District Women in the Workplace forum, the first of its kind. This forum is responsible for overseeing things related to women in the workplace.

The forum also must assist all health facilities to form their Women in the Workplace Forums. Unfortunately, the former Chairperson for the District forum

left in February 2024, but the new chairperson; Mrs Thandeka Nzama took over and together with the other members are determined to succeed and make a change.

The District forum planned and facilitated an elegant event where all women in the workplace forum members from all facilities were invited. The event aimed to share, educate, advise and learn from each other as the concept of the women in the workplace forum is still new and some lines and functions may be blurry for most. At the event, there was information on mental health,

Gender Based Violence (GBV), finance and self-care. Also, there was a brief cooking demonstration. The theme of the event was elegant outfits and hats. The attendees competed against each other for the best dressed woman and woman with the best hat. Attendees participated in fun games and won prizes. There was plenty of food and snacks that went with the elegance theme. Thanks to Mr Siyabonga Gwala from Townhill Hospital for providing DJ services.

There is more the district forum still has in store for the ladies. The ultimate goal is for all forums in all facilities to be active and regularly report progress.

The women's forum is established in terms of the National Gender Equality Strategic Framework issued by the DPSA and the Gender Equality Bill. The functions of the forum are, to ensure workplace implementation of the National Gender Equality Framework as guided by the women in leadership forum. They must also identify, address, and report areas of concern that may arise during the implementation of the National Gender Equality Framework.



Guests came in dressed to kill, despite the weather being extremely cold and raining

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WOMEN'S MONTH EVENT FOR WOMEN IN THE WORK-PLACE FORUM—PICTURE GALLERY



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3



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Pic 1 & Pic 2: The guests competed with their outfits, Winner of best dressed (best outfit, pic 1) and winner of best hat (pic2) competition.

Pic 3 & 5: The audience looked good in their elegant outfits and hats, they also enjoyed the interactions

Pic 6: Ms M.J Peters advised the attendees about good mental health and self care and how this is important for all women



DISTRICT OFFICE WOMEN ENJOYED CELEBRATING WOMEN'S DAY FILLED WITH HELPFUL INFORMATION

Women in the uMgungundlovu Health District office gathered on 30th August 2025 to close the National Women's Month with a big bang. Ladies came together to hear what was in store for them and also to get advice on how to support each other, how to prosper and other information concerning women's empowerment. The theme for this event was casual and pink. Pink symbolizes the fight against breast cancer. Although August is not a breast cancer awareness month, it is in October, the planning team felt it was necessary to grab the opportunity of the event to educate women about breast cancer. Mrs Karen Hadden, a

staff member at the district office and a survivor of breast cancer told her journey from diagnosis to treatment and coping. In her speech, she emphasized the importance of knowing your body and doing regular checkups. She also emphasized the importance of support, whether from colleagues, family, friends, church members, community members and so forth; support can never be too much. Mr Ayanda Mkhize from Old Mutual gave an eye-opening insight about financial health and management. He mentioned that women must be fearless and take control of their money by budgeting, saving and investing. Stay away from bad unnecessary debts. He also mentioned that you must pay

attention to your spending habits, and differentiate between needs and wants. Set financial goals with timelines and focus on them. Lastly, protect your assets and family, this includes growing wealth, insuring your assets, updating who is beneficiary to your pensions and other policies, seeking professional advice, have an updated will; it can be created free from the Old Mutual website. He concluded that women are becoming victims of love scams and fraudsters who pretend to love them and convince them to give up their valuable assets and pensions to them and disappear; "be suspicious, seek advice & involve the police if you feel your partner is a love-scammer" he said. Ms Hlengiwe Ngcobobo who is an Employee Assistant Practitioner at Greys Hospital focused on self care and self love. She emphasised that love yourself first and prioritise your mental health, safety and physical health. Stop trying to be a hero to everyone whilst leaving yourself behind. There were games and fun activities for the attendees. There was also a raffle draw for gift vouchers. Refreshing meals were served at the end of the programme.



Some of the guests looking pretty, paying attention to speeches of empowerment

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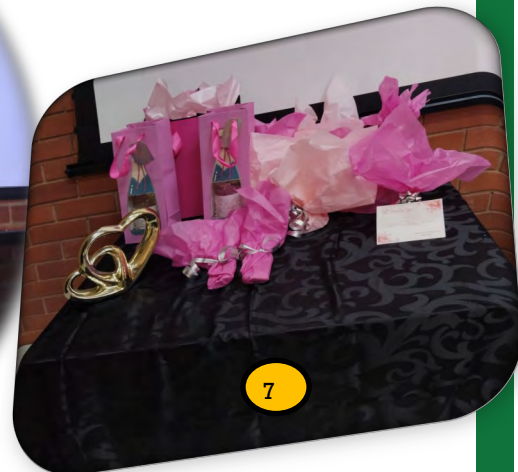
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DISTRICT OFFICE WOMEN'S DAY EVENT – PICTURE GALLERY



Pic 1 & 4: Some of the winners of a few competitive games & gift vouchers
Pic 3 & 6: Programme Director Mrs Precious Buthelezi handing gifts to the guests who gave speeches, Mr Ayanda Ntanzu from Old Mutual and Ms Hlengiwe Ngcobo, a speaker who encouraged the ladies to focus more on self-love.
Pic 5: Mrs Karren Hidden gave a touching speech about her journey through being diagnosed with breast cancer and her recovery
Pic 6: Table full of gifts for competition winners and raffle draw prizes



UMGUNGUNDLOVU'S FIRST VENDING MACHINE FOR SEXUAL HEALTH PRODUCTS LAUNCHED IN IMBALI TOWNSHIP, PIETERMARITZBURG

The battle against HIV and Aids continues to be a challenging one for the department and the community at large. With this in mind, TB HIV Care in collaboration with the Department of Health has started a pilot project that aims to make sexual and reproductive health (SRH) products more accessible.

This initiative involves the installation of vending machines that dispense condoms, lubricants and contraception to help reduce unplanned, teenage pregnancies and the spread of HIV. Ward 19, Imbali Township,

Manaye Hall in Msunduzi Municipality was lucky to receive this machine which was launched via an event on the 27th of August 2024. The machine is called the Digital Selfcare SRH Vendor Machine. The area chosen is easily accessible to the public. The machine is linked to iMbalenhle CHC, a health facility nearby. The main target for this project is the youth, it is a means to help protect and motivate young people to protect themselves from sexually transmitted infections and risky sexual behaviours without going to a

health facility.

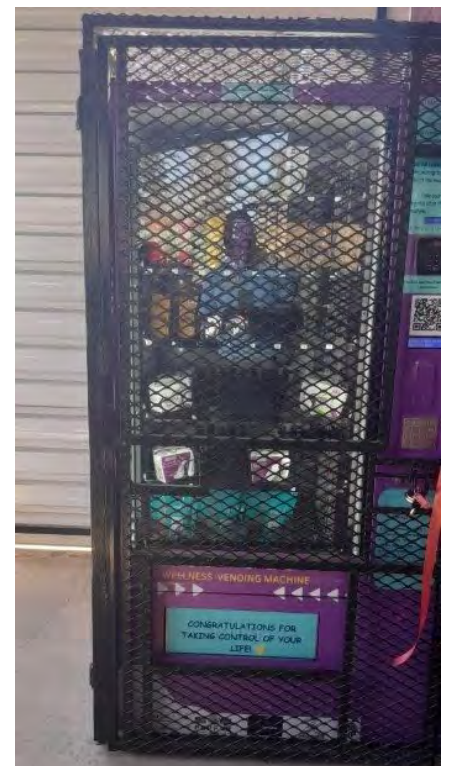
Available in the machine are male & female condoms, sanitary pads, lubricants, emergency contraceptives (morning-after pill), normal contraceptives, pregnancy kits and HIV test kits.

The machine has a number that the user will send a Please-call-me to. Then a health care provider will call them back and consult with them over the telephone. Then after that, the user will get a 7-digit number which they will use to get the product that they need.



The CEO of Imbalenhle CHC Mrs NXT Mtunzi officially opening the machine during the launch event

The vending machine is safely secured and works digitally



UMGUNGUNDLOVU DISTRICT OFFICE LAUNCHES A MEN IN THE WORKPLACE FORUM DURING MEN'S HEALTH MONTH

The uMgungundlovu Health District Office now has a formally appointed Men in the Workplace Forum which was launched on 31 July 2024. July is Men's Health awareness month, which encourages men to be more aware of matters affecting their health. The district office was launched as a facility, following the launch of various other health facilities.

This launch was headed by the District Men's Forum which was formally elected on 22 August 2023, chaired by Mr Mlekeleli Mbona.

The guest speaker of the day was Rev S Shangase from the KZN Department of Health Staff Wellness component. In his speech, he emphasized that men need each other for support and

advice. He also mentioned that men are natural protectors and leaders who must always try and put the needs of their families and communities first. He also emphasized the importance of men acknowledging mental health and noticing when there is a problem, seeking professional help. The men who were eventually chosen to represent the district office were elected by others who were part of the event.

Their positions are as follows:

- Chairperson: Mr P.K S'khosana from the Monitoring & Evaluation Component
- Deputy Chairperson: Mr N Zondi, from Human Resources Component
- Secretary: Mr M Mtshali from the Data Management Component

The chairperson of the District Forum, Mr M Mbona mentioned that the newly elected forum does not replace functions of collective bargaining but deals with matters that are better suited to resolution through consultation rather than through collective bargaining. These include discussing issues that affect men in the workplace and leadership positions, providing a networking platform for men, contributing towards awareness of gender discrimination and violence, focusing on men empowerment programmes, enhancing efficiency in the workplace, including male employees in joint decision-making on other matters and so on. Staff members were encouraged to support the forum and consult them if there is a need.



The men from the District Office gathered at the Boardroom during the launch of the District Office men in the workplace forum



DO YOUR PART—PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT, AVOID POLLUTION

The theme for World Environmental Health Day 2024 is "Environmental Health: Creating Resilient Communities through Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation".

The day is celebrated on 26 September. Awareness is promoted to educate the community on the importance of protecting the environment, knowing what is expected from them as individuals and how they can hold each other accountable.

Protecting and caring for the environment will positively affect the health of the community as there will be less pollution and environmental damage.

GENERALLY, EACH INDIVIDUAL CAN CONTRIBUTE BY DOING THE FOLLOWING:

1. Do not litter, avoid illegal dumping
2. Reduce, reuse, and recycle old products. Recycle cans, plastic, paper and bottles
3. Avoid buying unnecessary single-use plastic products, plastic bags, straws, and

containers as they have severe negative consequences on the environment. They end up in the ocean, dumpsites and landfills

4. Do not pollute water
5. Support the government's efforts in waste management
6. Avoid putting foreign products and litter in the ocean, dams, and other water sources
7. Buy local products and support local businesses that implement environmental friendly initiatives
8. Cycle your bicycle and walk more than using cars. If driving a car, keep it in a good condition.
9. Do not burn your garbage
10. Save water
11. Use less energy (gas and electricity)
12. Plant and care for trees. Trees filter pollutants and absorb carbon dioxide. Trees also release oxygen into the atmosphere and help cool our homes.
13. Teach your kids and family all the above points.

It is every person's responsibility to learn more about how to care for the environment. Keeping your town or area clean is everyone's responsibility.



Lakes and other water sources can be extremely polluted by the plastics that we carelessly discard

Source: https://www.sowetanlive.co.za/news/south-africa/2018-06-05-changing-this-one-habit-can-help-protect-the-environment/#google_vignette



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



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