



agriculture & rural development

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PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

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KZN DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT (KZN DARD) MEC, MR THEMBA MTHEMBU SPEAKING NOTES FOR COMMEMORATION OF WORLD AIDS DAY AND THE LAUNCH OF 16 DAYS OF THE ACTIVISM FOR NO VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND CHILDREN CAMPAIGN

FRIDAY: 01 DECEMBER 2016

**VENUE: GWINYAMATHE SPORTS FIELD (MATIMATOLO),
UMVOTI LOCAL MUNICIPALITY**

Mayor of Umvoti, Councillor T. Ngubane

Members of the Agriculture and Rural Development Portfolio Committee

Councillors

Amakhosi

Community Leaders

Ladies and Gentlemen

We are here today to commemorate two very important events. World Aids Day and the Launch of 16 days of Activism for No Violence against Women and Children.

South Africa has a high incidence of HIV/AIDS and we still struggle with the scourge of violence against the most vulnerable members of our society - our women and our children.

I will relate some figures to show you that the situation is improving but that a lot more work needs to be done for our people to enjoy a better quality of life. Government cannot change the situation on its own. This is why the theme for World Aids Day this year is, "IT IS IN OUR HANDS TO END HIV/TB." It is also in our hands to address violence against women and children by helping to build a more caring society

Ladies and Gentlemen this means that each one of us can help change the situation in our homes and community.

South Africa has 7 104 796 million people (aged 15-49) living with HIV. In KZN there are 1 622 870 living with HIV. There are currently 3 494 260 million

people on antiretroviral treatment (ART) in South Africa. KwaZulu-Natal has 1 124 005 people on the ART Program Programme.

According to statistics, putting people on treatment has reduced the number of deaths and increased the number of years that people live. Breadwinners and parents are now living productive lives without fear of dying too early thus leaving orphaned children. Mothers living with the virus now are giving birth to babies without the virus.

Despite these remarkable achievements, KZN has an HIV incidence (new infections) of 2.3% against a National HIV incidence of 1.8%. The incidence is high particularly amongst young women and girls between the ages of 15- 24 years. This means that KZN continues to be the centre of the HIV epidemic in the country.

The Provincial Government is determined to reverse this situation and has a variety of programmes to address both the high incidence of HIV/AIDS in the province as well as violence in our communities. It was very interesting listening to the community dialogues this morning. It makes us aware of the work that is being done to deal with these social ills and create a better life for our people in KwaZulu-Natal.

Ladies and Gentlemen, as it is World Aids Day I have come here with a special message from the Provincial Government on its Universal Test and Treat Programme, which is changing lives.

Universal Test and Treat is a strategy in which all HIV infected individuals receive treatment irrespective of the level of their CD4 count. This intervention is aimed at reducing the rate of HIV transmission by putting as many people as possible on treatment. Using World Health Organisation (WHO) estimates; it is predicted that through the Universal Test and Treat programme, the country will end HIV within 20yrs as a public health concern.

So what is the first step towards universal test and treat?

The first step is for everyone to know their HIV status by getting an HIV Test from your nearest health facility.

Once you know your status, visit the nearest clinic to access treatment or be linked to care and support programs so that you remain negative.

Here in the Umzinyathi the Provincial Government is making it easier for those on treatment to collect their medication. Systems have been worked out for queues to move faster.

The Department of Health has started a program called Adherence Clubs. This is whereof 5-10 patients form clubs as support groups and they can collect medication for each other. In Umzinyathi the target is to set up 315 adherence clubs to support 9 628 beneficiaries. Medication can be collected from a community Hall, Church, NGO/CBO or Retail Pharmacy. This includes all patients on chronic medication be it hypertension, diabetes or HIV. For more details please speak to your local clinic or hospital. Treatment centres will be available in mobile clinics in various areas including truck stops and taxi ranks.

All persons who tested HIV positive and are not on treatment are urged to return to their respective health facilities so that they can be started on treatment. Please tell your friends and neighbours about this. It is in your hands to make a difference to help bring down the incidence of HIV/AIDs here in Umvoti and in the District of Umzinyathi.

The KZN Government is committed to increasing the number of health care workers to manage HIV. Currently, there are many nurses and doctors already trained to provide treatment. All health facilities have received support to train more nurses on Nurse Initiated Management of ART (NIMART) and other relevant courses to help them better manage and initiate people on treatment.

However, it is most important that once a person starts treatment, they stick to it or else they will compromise their health.

Like Diabetes and high blood pressure, treatment for HIV/Aids is lifelong, so it is in your hands to keep up with the treatment to keep you healthy for many years and greatly reduce your chance to transmitting HIV to your partner. Most importantly, once you start treatment you need to live healthy life. This includes healthy eating.

As MEC for Agriculture and Rural Development, I am well aware of the high cost of nutritious food. Meat and vegetables are unaffordable to most households. The Department has reviewed its projects and a key programme going forward, is the production of nutritious food that households can afford. The doctors advise us that we must eat five portions of fruit and vegetables daily. Yet this is impossible for most families.

To promote healthy eating, the KZN Department of Agriculture and Rural Development is also encouraging families to grow their own vegetables and fruit. Early in the new year seeds, followed by fruit trees, will be made available for poor households.

Ladies and gentlemen it is in all our hands to adopt a culture of agriculture and use the spaces around our homes to grow their own fruit and vegetables that can be used in our own households and shared with friends and neighbours who may be on anti-retroviral treatment.

Finally, I want to tell you of something new that I learnt yesterday. An article in the Business Day said that hunger and poor nutrition can also be the cause of high levels of violence in our society.

According to the article, research has shown that poor nutrition in early life robs the brain of normal impulse control. The belief is that malnutrition affects the part of the brain that controls impulsiveness, and therefore makes people more likely to act violently in a wide range of situations. According to this article there was one study that found a significant relationship between low glucose levels in people and increased aggression towards their spouses.

As we enter the 16 days of No Violence against Women and Children, think about this study and the link between poor nutrition and violence. Think about

the need to plant fruit and vegetable gardens throughout uMzinyathi so that we not only bring down the levels of violence in our society but the high incidence of HIV/AIDs in our province.

It is in our all our hands to make use of the treatment and assistance offered by the Provincial Government. Let us work together to make the Umzinyathi District a healthier, happier and better place to live.

I Thank You



KZN MEC for Agriculture and Rural Development Mr Themba Mthembu together with Umvoti Local Municipality Deputy Mayor Clrr Nomvula Masikane, KZN Agriculture and Rural Development Deputy Director-General Ms Jabu Majola and Mr Dlamini, representative from Sukuma Sakhe, during a rally at the Greytown Taxi Rank



KZN MEC for Agriculture and Rural Development Mr Themba Mthembu, handing out condoms to young people at the Greytown Taxi Rank



MEC Themba Mthembu planting a fruit tree for the child-headed Ngcobo family



MEC Themba Mthembu together with Umvoti Local Municipality Deputy Mayor Clrr Nomvula Masikane and Umvoti Local Municipality Exco Member Clrr Thule Gwala handing over planting implements to the child-headed Ngcobo family



MEC Themba Mthembu together with Umvoti Local Municipality Deputy Mayor Clrr Nomvula Masikane, Umvoti Local Municipality Ward 2 Councillor Zandile Ngema and Umvoti Local Municipality Exco Member Clrr Thule Gwala during the lighting of candles in commemoration of World Aids Day



MEC Themba Mthembu together with Umvoti Local Municipality Deputy Mayor Clrr Nomvula Masikane, Umvoti Local Municipality Ward 2 Councillor Zandile Ngema, Umvoti Local Municipality Exco Member Clrr Thule Gwala and Umvoti Local Municipality Ward 7 Councillor Vukani Njoko handing over food parcels to the needy families of the Matimatolo Community

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