

World Aids Day Address by Mayor Zandile Gumede

The World Aids Day is held annually on the 1st of December and this year it is commemorated under the theme: “***Cheka Impilo. Know Your Status***”. The day is meant to unite people around the world in the fight against HIV and AIDS, show support for people living with HIV and to remember those who have died.

The theme is in line with the national wellness campaign known as “Cheka Impilo” – which is a call to action to all South Africans to take responsibility for their health and wellness.

South Africa has come a long way in the fight against HIV and Aids. It is today acknowledged by UNAIDS and others as a global and continental leader in HIV response. This is precisely because the country has the right policies in place and the political will to see them implemented.

South Africa has the biggest HIV treatment programme in the world, with more than 4.2 million people on life-saving antiretrovirals. Millions of South Africans who previously had no hope now live productive lives due to our massive rollout of ARV treatment. The treatment has led to increase in life expectancy and low levels of mother-to-child HIV transmission rates.

Our main message is simple - ***Get tested and know your status this World AIDS Day.***

- The World AIDS Day is an opportunity for everyone to unite in the fight against HIV and Aids.
- Knowing your HIV status helps in making informed decisions on preventative measures, treatment, care and support.
- World AIDS Day is used to teach the public the truth about the virus, how it is spread, its symptoms and treatments.

It is important to note that the ANC government has made health one of its five priorities for the past two terms. We have made significant improvement across. South Africa has made significant progress in its efforts to respond to HIV and TB:

- South Africa has the largest ARV programme in the world with 4.2 million people on treatment.
- All HIV positive South Africans now have access to anti-retroviral drugs irrespective of their CD4 count.
- The treatment has led to decline in HIV/AIDS related deaths and increase in life expectancy and low levels of mother-to-child HIV transmission rates.
- The Stats SA Mid-year population estimates report for 2018 shows that significant progress has been made on HIV.
 - The number of AIDS-related deaths declined consistently since 2007 from 276 921 to 115 167 AIDS related deaths in 2018.
 - HIV prevalence among the youth aged 15–24 has declined over time from 6,7 per cent in 2002 to 5,5 per cent in 2018.
 - Infant mortality rate has declined from an estimated 53,2 infant deaths per 1 000 live births in 2002 to 36,4 infant deaths per 1 000 live births in 2018.

- Similarly, the under-five mortality rate declined from 80,1 child deaths per 1 000 live births to 45,0 child deaths per 1 000 live births between 2002 and 2018.
- Life expectancy at birth for 2018 is estimated at 61,1 years for males and 67,3 years for females.
- The infant mortality rate for 2018 is estimated at 36,4 per 1 000 live births.
- The 'Cheka Impilo' campaign promotes HIV testing, widespread distribution of condoms, and the provision of pre- and post-exposure prophylaxis against HIV.

With the new innovation through GeneXpert – TB testing machine, TB tests now yield results within two hours.

Malukazi outreach

We held a powerful and successful Mayoral Imbizo in Malukazi settlement, about 7000 people were successfully screened for Tuberculosis (TB) in Malukazi Informal Settlement in Ward 89. The screenings were conducted on the 1st of November at Windy Heights Primary School sports ground during Imbizo.

As part of the Imbizo, I conducted the TB campaign that was aimed at addressing the high prevalence of TB in the area. The intervention to eradicate TB in the informal settlement comes after the area was listed in the national health survey as having a high TB infection rate. South Africa is among the countries with the highest TB infections, with the World Health Organisation statistics giving an estimated incidence of 454 000 cases of active TB in 2015.

Out of the 7000 people screened for TB, 356 had TB related symptoms and 14 of those had contracted the disease. During that day, we also tested people for HIV. Out of the 859 that were tested, 444 tested positive and 50 of those that tested positive are now on treatment.

We will be going around the affected areas and we are serious about addressing health issues of our people in the region.