

**SPEECH BY MEC FOR COOPERATIVE GOVERNANCE, TRADITIONAL AFFAIRS
AND HUMAN SETTLEMENTS: MOSEBENZI ZWANE**

DEPARTMENTAL WELLNESS DAY, 15 DECEMBER 2010

Today marks the departmental Wellness day campaign. The day creates an opportunity to take stock of the ministry's commitment through the Employee Health and Wellness Sub-directorate. Employee Health and Wellness Sub-directorate, in its mandate to ensure employee physical wellness by promoting fitness and healthy lifestyles through sports, exercises and recreational activities plays a leading role in creating a conducive environment for work-life balance.

The main aim of this programme is to build and maintain a healthy workforce for increased productivity and enhanced service delivery. According to the National Employee Health and Wellness Strategic Framework for the Public Service, the programme is based on four functional pillars.

Pillar 1 represents: HIV& AIDS and TB management

Aim: To mitigate the impact of HIV& AIDS and TB epidemic and improvement of the department's service delivery to reduce the number of infections and impact on individual employees.

Pillar 2 represents: Health and Productivity management

Aim: To manage communicable and non-communicable diseases, mental health/ psychosomatic illnesses, injury on duty and incapacity due to ill-health and occupational health education in order to enhance productivity

Pillar 3 represents: Safety, Health, Environment, Risk and Quality management

Aim: To anticipate, evaluate, educate and control health hazards in the departments to protect employee's health and wellbeing as well as to safeguard the community at large.(clients)

Pillar 4 represents: Wellness management

Aim: To provide individual wellness and organisational wellness to improve work-life balance.

The purpose of today's gathering is to give recognition to the integrated wellness approach, most importantly, pillar 1 (HIV& AIDS and TB management) which derives its mandate from the National Strategic Plan for HIV and AIDS and STIs (NSP), 2007-2011. The NSP was formulated in response to South Africa's HIV epidemic. The two primary goals of this plan are to reduce the incidence of new infections in our country by half and to ensure that at least 80% of those who are already HIV-positive have access to treatment by 2011.

On the 01st December 2009 (World AIDS Day), President Jacob Zuma made the following announcements that have far-reaching implications to public health service provision:

- Every South African should know his or her HIV status.

- All children under one year of age will get treatment if they test positive. Initiating treatment will therefore not be determined by the level of CD cells.
- All patients with both tuberculosis (TB) and HIV will get anti-retroviral treatment if their CD4 count is 350 or less. (The co-infection between TB and HIV is 73%. At present treatment is available when the CD4 count is less than 200).
- All pregnant HIV positive women with a CD4 count of 350 or with symptoms regardless of CD4 count will have access to treatment. (At present HIV positive pregnant women are eligible for treatment if their CD4 count is less than 200).
- All other pregnant women not falling into this category, but who are HIV positive, will be put on treatment at fourteen weeks of pregnancy to protect the baby. (In the past this was only started during the last term of pregnancy).

In order to give impetus to these announcements as well as the implementation of the National Strategic Plan, the Minister of Health, Dr Aaron Motsoaledi pronounced the HIV Counseling and Testing (HCT) Campaign (April 2010 – June 2011).

Implementation of the HCT campaign requires public and private sector support. The Department of Health is to take the lead in driving both the testing and treatment aspects of the campaign. The private sector (NPOs and business) has already started assisting through various collaborative arrangements and these partnerships are expected to strengthen with time.

You are all encouraged to test and know your status in order to make informed decisions about your future.

Thank you