

Public Health in the News

KZN fight against HIV/AIDS improved: Mchunu

KwaZulu-Natal Premier, Senzo Mchunu says while the province remains the area with the highest prevalence of HIV, significant strides have been made in the fight against the scourge. Mchunu has been speaking at the World Aids Day commemoration in Port Shepstone. A Human Sciences Research Council study done last year showed that 16.8% of the country's total population of people with HIV live in KZN.



Mchunu says despite this, the province has been able to reduce the rate of mother to child transmission and increase the number of people on anti-retrovirals. "Unlike many others, HIV/AIDS cannot be overcome simply by improving the quality of drinking water or by mass immunisation. "It can only be overcome by individuals taking responsibility for their own lives and taking responsibility for the lives of others around them," he said.

Sources *ECR, 01 Dec 2015*

Context

KwaZulu-Natal, is known as the province which has become the epicentre for the HIV/Aids epidemic in South Africa. The province has recently seen the launch of Operation Sukuma Sakhe – and initiative calling on the people of KZN to be determined to overcome the issues that have destroyed communities such as poverty, unemployment, crime, substance abuse, HIV/Aids and Tuberculosis.

Doctors Without Borders believes that KZN has among the highest HIV infection rates in the world with an estimated 25.2% of the province's adult population living with the virus. According to Premier Senzo Mchunu, among factors that

make a place susceptible to the epidemic is "a history of low standards of living, characterised by poverty, living conditions that make it conducive for people to engage in sexual activities that breeds to HIV/Aids, which are informal settlements".

Premier Mchunu indicated that a factory producing ARVs will soon be opened in the province which will address the shortage of ARVs, while also reducing the cost. At the moment, around 1.5 million people are accessing ARV in the province.

Sources: *SABC, 01 Dec. 2015*

WAMTechnology is a provider of technological solutions and specialist engineering services in both the health and water sectors. We support the health sector in particular with the development of custom software products such as electronic health/disease and medication surveillance registers. One of the important electronic registers that we have helped develop and continue to support, is the TIER.Net system (previously known as the HIV eRegister).

It captures data elements and resulting indicators (based on the WHO paper registers) required to monitor HIV and ART services. Monthly and quarterly reports can be generated, with data encrypted dispatch files transferred to higher management levels (e.g. provinces or national) for further analysis. The system also supports WHO reports, such as: WHO Cohort and WHO Cross Sectional Monthly Reports.

The TIER.Net software can also export data and cohort reports to MS Excel. Data can be exchanged between the TIER.Net software and external software tools using a modified version of the HICDEP (HIV Cohorts Data Exchange Protocol) format. TIER.Net can also import data from EMR (Electronic Medical Record) systems if they export data in the relevant format. TIER.Net is a facility based patient management system implemented throughout South Africa and has also been implemented in Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Sudan.

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