

NEWS BULLETIN

Official Newsletter of the Gauteng Department of Health

11 FEBRUARY 2024



Our clinics provide free condoms and STI and HIV prevention, testing and treatment services. We should not let STIs go untreated as they increase the risk of HIV infection and transmission which will hamper the Provinces' goal to reduce new HIV infections by 2030."
- MEC Nkomo-Ralehoko

Love may be in the air, but risky sexual behaviour increases chances of contracting STIs

With Valentine's Day around the corner, the Gauteng Department of Health (GDoH) wishes to caution the public from engaging in risky sexual behaviour as this increases the transmission of Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) and HIV infection.

Between April and December 2023, a total of 167 109 males presented at public health facilities across the province and 67 400 (40%) were treated for Male Urethritis Syndrome (MUS). The MUS data accurately reflects newly acquired STIs.

Symptoms of MUS include discharge from the penis and burning urination. If left untreated complications can include pain and swelling of the testes. Gonorrhoeae and chlamydia are the most predominant cause of MUS in South Africa.

In 2020, the MUS incidence in the province was recorded at 12% and has increased over the years to 15% in 2023. This data reflects an increase of STI incidence in sub-district E (Alex/Sandton) and F (Inner City/Braamfontein/Hillbrow) in Johannesburg, Merafong sub-district in West Rand, Katlehong, Ekurhuleni South (Germiston, Katlehong and Vooslorus), Lesedi in Sedibeng and Region 7 (Bronkhorstspuit) in Tshwane.

Sub-district E and F in Johannesburg has tertiary institutions and high-risk individuals such as sex workers and people who inject with drugs. Merafong is a mining area with a majority of the male population, Region 7 has farming areas where cultural norms hinder uptake of services especially amongst men, while Ekurhuleni South and Lesedi have TVET colleges, informal settlements, truck stops and hostels.

The GDoH has implemented a combination of prevention intervention approaches which incorporate STI components in these areas such as the promotion of consistent use of male and female condoms which are free and available in health facilities, encouraging the reduction in the number of sexual partners, increased uptake of HIV counselling and testing, STI screening, delayed sexual debut, as well as the promotion of sexual wellbeing.

MEC for Health and Wellness, Nomantu Nkomo-Ralehoko has urged people that are sexually active to use male and female condoms which they can access for free at their local healthcare centres to protect themselves against STIs and HIV.

"In terms of the high MUS incidence recorded in the mentioned areas we have identified behavioural factors that contribute to the high Male Urethritis Syndrome. The contributory factors include high rates of unsafe behaviour such as non-use of condoms whilst engaging in vaginal or anal sex, multiple sexual partners, inconsistent condom use, high levels of substance use and cultural norms.

"Our clinics provide free condoms and STI and HIV prevention, testing and treatment services. We should not let STIs go untreated as they increase the risk of HIV infection and transmission which will hamper the province's goal to reduce new HIV infections by 2030," emphasised MEC Nkomo-Ralehoko.

In addition, the MEC encouraged women to start early antenatal care as soon as they realise that they are pregnant for thorough screening of any STI, and appropriate and timely treatment for those who test positive.

"Between April and December 2023, 1 255 out of 66 377 pregnant woman who presented at our facilities for antenatal care for the first time tested positive for Syphilis.

"If left untreated in pregnant women, Syphilis can have adverse outcomes for the growing baby as well as increase morbidity in the mother. It can be passed from mother to baby during pregnancy (congenital syphilis), leading to stillbirths, health complications, congenital deformities and even infant death," said the concerned MEC Nkomo-Ralehoko.

The MEC also said that there has been a noticeable increase in women that are presenting at health facilities to be initiated on Pre-Exposure



MEC for Health and Wellness, Nomantu Nkomo-Ralehoko engages with learners at Rustervaal Secondary School on the impact of social ills such as teenage pregnancy, bullying and substance abuse on their future. The MEC cautioned the learners not to experiment with cigarettes as this can lead to the use of more dangerous drugs, noting the alarming levels of substance use disorders among psychiatric patients.

#AsibeHealthyGP

Prophylaxis (PrEP), which is an antiretroviral drug prescribed for HIV-negative people to prevent them from becoming infected with HIV. Between April and November 2023, a total of 38 305 females aged 15 to 49 years were initiated on PrEP in comparison to 11 988 males.

"We believe that the high uptake of PrEP among women has led this group to having unprotected sex resulting in high incidence of MUS. The studies have reported that STI incidence is also high among young women receiving PrEP.

"We would like to encourage more males to get initiated on PrEP to protect themselves against STI. Additionally, both men and women who are on PrEP should use condoms to protect themselves against STIs, HIV and unwanted pregnancies," stated the MEC.

February is Sexual and Reproductive Health awareness month and is also the period in which the country observes STI/Condom Week (6-10 February) which is used to raise awareness on the significance of practising safe and protected sex. Pregnancy Awareness week also falls during this period.

Prioritise antenatal care for a positive pregnancy experience

Pregnancy is a sacred and transformative period in a woman's life and ensuring the health and well-being of both the mother and the unborn child is of utmost importance. Early antenatal care plays a key role in promoting the health and wellness of pregnant and breastfeeding women, as well as their children up to the age of two years.

In recent years, the Gauteng Department of Health has noticed a pattern whereby many expectant mothers fail to seek early antenatal care before 20 weeks of pregnancy. In 2022/23, approximately 70,457 women who gave birth in health facilities across the province started antenatal care after this crucial period.

Antenatal care during the early stages of pregnancy is the first step in the window of opportunity programme to address potential health issues, promote optimal development, and prevent complications. During this stage of pregnancy, healthcare professionals offer guidance on nutrition, exercise, and lifestyle choices that support the well-being of expectant mothers and their unborn children.

In addition, this care enables early detection, early treatment and early referral to the appropriate level of care for complications relating to pregnancy such as hypertension, diabetes, vaginal bleeding, and other danger signs that can affect pregnancy



like headache, blurred vision, epigastric pains that could be signs of more serious diseases.

However, late bookings deny pregnant women the opportunity to access essential healthcare services provided during early antenatal care and may lead to regrettable complications that could have been avoided or well-managed to preserve lives. It is therefore imperative that expectant mothers prioritise early antenatal care to ensure the best possible outcomes for themselves and their babies.

The GDoH encourages all expectant mothers to visit their nearest health facilities and book their appointments early, ideally within the first 12 weeks of pregnancy for a positive pregnancy experience.

The World Health Organisation recommends a minimum of eight visits as a form of preventive health care to empower pregnant women with information and knowledge about healthy behaviours during pregnancy, better understanding of warning signs, childbirth, as well

as social, emotional, and psychological support at this critical time in their lives.

Regular antenatal visits throughout the pregnancy are also essential for monitoring the progress of the pregnancy, assessing the impact of treatments, and allowing for early intervention if necessary. Through antenatal care, pregnant women can also access micronutrient supplementation as well as HIV testing and medications to prevent mother-to-child transmission of HIV.

Furthermore, the GDoH strongly advise pregnant women to refrain from consuming alcohol or drugs that are not prescribed by their midwife or attending doctor as these substances can pose serious risks to the health and development of the unborn child.

The Department will continue to spread awareness about the importance of antenatal care to empower women to make informed decisions about their health and the health of their children beyond the Pregnancy Awareness Week (6 – 10 February 2024).



Healthy & Safe Pregnancy

All clinics and community healthcare centres in Gauteng provide free HIV testing, voluntary counselling and early detection of danger signs in pregnancy and post-delivery.

Visit your nearest clinic for early antenatal care as soon as you miss your period!

Seek immediate medical attention when presenting with food poisoning symptoms

Communities have been urged to immediately visit their nearest health facilities for treatment when they present with food poisoning symptoms such as vomiting, sudden chest pains, body ache/weakness, fever or foam in the mouth.

This caution follows the recent incident involving four children aged 2, 3, 6 and 9 years in Tsakane, City of Ekurhuleni being who were admitted at Pholosong Regional Hospital on 07 February 2023 following a suspected food poisoning incident, while the fifth child aged six years old was declared dead upon arrival of the paramedics.

The four children were discharged on Thursday, 08 February 2024 and will continue to receive



psychosocial support on an outpatient basis.

The recent incident means that since the first food poisoning incident reported in October 2023, the Gauteng Department of Health (GDoH) has recorded cumulatively 861 food borne incidences which have resulted in 11 deaths.

The GDoH's provincial and district outbreak response team has been on the ground conducting public health education and food safety blitz at the spaza shops across the province to raise awareness on the importance of proper food handling to prevent food contamination which may cause diseases and poisoning.

The blitz is part of ongoing efforts to empower communities on food safety tips such as food handling, preparation, storage, the importance of checking food expiry labels and hand washing before handling food. It also educates vendors and consumers to ensure that pesticides (insect poison) or rodenticides (rat poison) are applied in a manner that will not contaminate food items, as contaminated food with canesult in poisoning and adverse health outcomes for people.

The GDoH has since visited the family of the child that demised to extend heartfelt condolences and provide support to the family, as well as update them on the ongoing investigation process. The department will also provide the family with psychological support after the funeral.

Vendors and consumers to ensure that pesticides (insect poison) or rodenticides (rat poison) are applied in a manner that will not contaminate food items, as contaminated food with canesult in poisoning and adverse health outcomes for people."

Long-standing partnerships for cancer prevention, detection and treatment

Koketso Maraba

Fostering sustained collaborations is crucial in bridging gaps in cancer prevention, detection and treatment.

This is embodied in the long-standing partnership between the Gauteng Department of Health (GDoH) and PinkDrive which has ensured that more individuals have access to vital cancer services across the province.

MEC for Health and Wellness, Nomantu Nkomo-Ralehoko joined the Minister of Health, Dr Joe Phaahla together with the CEO and Founder of PinkDrive, Noelene Kotschan to commemorate World Cancer Day (4 February) at Laudium in Tshwane on Tuesday, 06 February 2024.

MEC Nkomo-Ralehoko said that the GDoH has made notable achievements in the screening, treatment, and cure of cancer in the province, while recognising the crucial role played by organisations such as PinkDrive.



"PinkDrive has for many years complimented the work of government by expanding the availability of the cancer screening programme, particularly for breast cancer, pap smears and prostate cancer screening. Through such partnerships, we are able to ensure early detection of cancer in our communities and ensure appropriate treatment to achieve cure in our facilities," stated MEC Nkomo-Ralehoko.

On the day, the GDoH and PinkDrive conducted various screening for cancer including 60 mammograms, 80 pap smears and 60 prostate-specific antigen, as well as lung cancer.

"As the PinkDrive, we pride ourselves in partnering with the public sector to ensure access to mobile mammography units, health education personnel and gender-related screening services to areas where local clinics are under-resourced," said Kotschan. In Gauteng, there are 10 hospitals equipped with

mammogram services, and the GDoH is making efforts to expand this initiative by adding mammogram outreach services to 15 more hospitals. For cervical cancer prevention, the Department is focusing on promoting the HPV vaccination for girls aged 9-15 years, while in adults achievement has been made in transitioning to Liquid-Based Cytology for cervical cancer screening.

In the area of cervical cancer management and control, the GDoH has partnered with the Clinton Health Access Initiative to enhance access to treatments for precancerous cervical conditions. This collaboration has led to the donation of 25 Large Loop Excision of the Transformation zone (LLETZ) machines and 7 Colposcopy machines to various health facilities. There are now 23 public hospitals equipped with LLETZ services, 21 offering Colposcopy, 6 providing Chemotherapy and 5 capable of administering Radiotherapy.

CONDOMS PROTECT AGAINST STIs & HIV



Symptoms of Sexually Transmitted Infections include, amongst others, abnormal vaginal or penile discharge, burning urine, genital ulcer, painful Intercourse, lower abdominal pain and scrotal swelling.

Visit your local clinic for free condoms and STI and HIV prevention, testing, and treatment!



Commitment to convert a dumping site into to a food garden fulfilled

The community of N12 informal settlement in Cloverdene, Benoni will now be able to get vegetables at their new community garden.

This comes after MEC for Health and Wellness, Nomantu Nkomo-Ralehoko handed over a vegetable garden to the community of N12 informal settlement on Thursday, 08 February 2024, fulfilling a promise made in September 2023 to transform a dumping site into a source of food for the local community.

Already, the garden has various vegetables growing which include cabbage, spinach, beetroot and onions amongst others. It will

promote environmentally friendly practices for long-term viability, active community involvement to instil ownership and addressing local nutritional needs for enhanced food security.

Community leader, Musawenkosi Ngobese (38) said that the community of N12 informal settlement comprises of many households that are in need and the garden will ensure that they are fed.

"We are grateful for this initiative by the provincial government to ensure that communities are able

to sustain themselves by empowering them with a food source. We would like to see this concept being implemented across all sections in this informal settlement so that many households can be empowered," said Ngobese.

This initiative is in collaboration with the Gauteng Department of Agriculture and Rural Development which ensured the provision of seeds and tools for further management of the vegetable garden.

MEC Nkomo-Ralehoko said that the vegetable garden is a comprehensive, impactful and replicable model, contributing significantly to the community's well-being and development.

"We often get members of this community presenting at our health facilities showing signs of malnutrition. This garden will make a difference in many lives in this community and as government, we pledge our full support in ensuring sustainable food security and the eradication of starvation," said MEC Nkomo-Ralehoko.

In addition to the food garden, the Gauteng Department of Health also rendered a basket of health services to the community including screening for hypertension, diabetes, TB, STIs and HIV, PrEP and PeP services, family planning, Pap smear, treatment of minor ailments and therapeutic services.

Fostering a common understanding towards NHI readiness

Dr Adiel Chikobvu

With both the two houses of Parliament (the National Assembly and National Council of Provinces) having adopted the National Health Insurance (NHI) Bill, which is now before the President to assent, the stage is set for the advancement of a journey to fundamentally reform the health system.

Provinces like Gauteng are poised to play an instrumental role given the size of the healthcare system and the volume of people seen annually within the public health system in the province. Over 19 million patient visits were recorded in the 2022/23 financial year, representing a six percent increase compared to the previous year. Majority of these are people who solely rely on the public healthcare system to access health services.

The envisaged NHI reforms are premised on several key interrelated elements and whilst awaiting a comprehensive Masterplan that will guide all provinces, the Gauteng Department of Health (GDoH) is undertaking initiatives that are still necessary for Universal Health Coverage (UHC) with or without the passage of the Bill.

To gear itself up the GDoH has put in place the NHI Readiness Action Plan which seeks to ensure collaboration and readiness between all internal and external players by providing for a common understanding and grasp.

Some of the key elements of the plan includes but are not limited to:

- Engaging all stakeholders and partners on anticipated reconfigurations to the healthcare platform as well as associated deliverables
- Implementation of Functional Business Units and Cost Centres to enhance efficiencies



It is important to emphasise that implementation of the NHI will be a gradual process and one that constitutes massive and far-reaching reforms at many levels. "
~ Dr Chikobvu

in preparation of strategic purchasing and enhancing reimbursement mechanisms and systems (for Diagnostic Related Groups (DRG) / capitation payments, global budgets etc), sharing of experiences and lessons learnt (Proof of Concept)

- The need and priorities for facilities improvement (refurbishments and new builds); enhancing ICT connectivity; Health Patient Registration System (HPRS) deployment (provincial and local government + Private sector engagement to ensure interoperability of systems to HPRS), Clinic rationalisation.
- Governance, Management and Leadership - focusing on the framework that enhances managerial autonomy, delegation of functions and accountability i.e. Delegations to Hospitals & Districts, Hospital Boards and Clinic Committees, and fast-tracking skills transfer, and capacity

needs required especially for District Health Management Office and Central Hospitals.

- Completion of provincialization and preparatory processes towards integration of Primary Healthcare Services across the metros and districts. Ensuring that the digital solutions are configured to support appropriate information and M&E for management and clinical accountability, and implications to the Quality Improvement Programme and Ideal Clinic requirements.
- Strengthening the health system (readiness) through the "Health Compact" which established nine areas for cooperation and collaboration of many stakeholders.
- The Stewardship role of the Provinces under NHI (public & private), as well as multidisciplinary networks of practices in conformity to the Ideal Clinic model etc.

The Action Plan will be operationalised through GDoH units and structures that match their mandates; lays out the basic elements of the action steps for NHI readiness. Once the Bill becomes law, there will be much more to do to achieve the establishment of a unified health system.

Transforming the health care financing system requires changing how revenue is collected and even more importantly, addressing how generated funds are pooled and how quality services are purchased. The implementation of NHI will require amendment of related legislation and enactment of new laws to ensure that there is not only legislative alignment but also policy consistence across government departments and spheres of government.

Even though several health systems strengthening efforts have been and continue to be implemented in recent years as part of Universal health Coverage there remains several cross-cutting actions that are required to achieve an integrated national health system. Section 57 of the Bill outlines Transitional Arrangements to be undertaken to ensure readiness for NHI implementation as part of "NHI Transitioning" i.e. once the Bill becomes law, but full NHI implementation would not have commenced.

It is important to emphasise that implementation of the NHI will be a gradual process and one that constitutes massive and far-reaching reforms at many levels. Already there are many varying expectations out there. Nevertheless, there will be many lessons to be learnt along the way and a need to explore various options for various challenges as they emerge. Gauteng is gearing up!

Dr Chikobvu is a Director within the NHI Unit in the Gauteng Department of Health



MATTERS TO US!

Special gratitude to the Far East Rand Hospital team

To the Management of Far East Rand Hospital.

I wish to thank the Urology team (Room 9) at Far East Rand Hospital for the Nephrectomy surgery done on the 25th of October.

The warm service I received from the doctors is beyond exceptional. I would like to show appreciation to this team for all your hard work and dedication.

I'm sincerely thankful that you took care of me during that difficult time and made sure that my wound heals quickly.

Special gratitude goes to Dr Kulu, Dr Ekanem, Dr Molefe and Dr Ramasha including the nurses at Ward 3, especially Sister Mathebula. Your efforts will never go unnoticed

Thanks a million

Nombulelo Khalamshe, Facebook


QUALITY ASSURANCE CONTACT US!



For any hospital or clinic complaints please contact the **Gauteng Department of Health** on the **24-hour customer line** on.

 **0800 203 886 (Toll free number)**

 **patients.health@gauteng.gov.za or support@gauteng.gov.za**

 **SMS : 35023**

* Letter grammatically edited

For letters, contribution and suggestion contact GDoHStories@gauteng.gov.za

For more information on Gauteng Department of Health programmes, News and other information, visit our social media pages:

 **Gauteng Health Department**

   **@gautenghealth**

 **Gauteng Department of Health**



NASI iSPANI!

THOUSANDS AND THOUSANDS OF JOBS ON OFFER

BECOME PART OF A PATIENT-CENTRED CLINICIAN-LED, STAKEHOLDER-DRIVEN HEALTHCARE SERVICE

APPLY

GAUTENG DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH VACANCIES

Social Work Supervisor - West Rand District Health Services
Dental Assistant - West Rand District Health Services
Dental Assistant (Sessional) - West Rand District Health Services
Professional Nurse General - West Rand District Health Services (MCWH)
Occupation Therapy Technician - West Rand District Health Services (Mogale Sub-District x1) (Merafong Sub-District x1)
Operational Manager Nursing - West Rand District Health Services (Randfontein Sub-District)
Dental Assistant - West Rand District Health Services
Social Worker - West Rand District Health Services
Social Worker - West Rand District Health Services (Merafong Sub-District)
Assistant Director Occupational Therapy - Steve Biko Academic Hospital
Clinical Psychologist - West Rand District Health Services
Secretary - Steve Biko Academic Hospital
Clinical Programme Coordinator - West Rand District Health Services
Staff Nurse (TB Programme) - West Rand District Health Services
Professional Nurse Specialty (Advanced Midwifery) - West Rand District Health Services
Clinical Programme Coordinator (TB Programme) - West Rand District Health Services
Chief Optometrist - West Rand District Health Services
Clinical Programme Coordinator (Drug Resistance TB) - West Rand District Health Services
Occupation Therapy Technician - West Rand District Health Services (Merafong Sub-District)
Laundry Worker - South Rand District Hospital
Cleaner - South Rand District Hospital
Assistant Director: Security - Helen Joseph Hospital
Operational Manager Specialty (Advanced Midwifery) - West Rand District Health Services (MCWH)
Optometrist - West Rand District Health Services (Mogale Sub-District)
Nursing Assistant - West Rand District Health Services (Merafong Sub-District)
Staff Nurse (Ward Based Primary Health Care Outreach Team) - West Rand District Health Services (Mogale Sub-District x1) (Merafong Sub-District x1)
Staff Nurse - West Rand District Health Services (Randfontein Sub-District)
Staff Nurse - West Rand District Health Services (Westonaria Sub-District)
Staff Nurse - West Rand District Health Services (Mogale Sub-District)
Staff Nurse - West Rand District Health Services (Merafong Sub-District)
Professional Nurse General - West Rand District Health Services (Westonaria Sub-District)
Professional Nurse General - West Rand District Health Services (Randfontein Sub-District)

Professional Nurse General - West Rand District Health Services (Mogale Sub-District)
Professional Nurse General - West Rand District Health Services (Merafong Sub-District)
Clinical Programme Coordinator - West Rand District Health Services (Merafong Sub-District)
Professional Nurse Specialty (Advanced Midwifery) - West Rand District Health Services (Westonaria Sub-District)
Professional Nurse Specialty (Advanced Midwifery) - West Rand District Health Services (Merafong Sub-District)
Clinical Nurse Practitioner - West Rand District Health Services (Merafong Sub-District)
Professional Nurse Specialty: Primary Health Care - West Rand District Health Services (Mogale Sub-District)
Professional Nurse Specialty: Primary Health Care - West Rand District Health Services (Westonaria Sub-District)
Operational Manager Nursing - West Rand District Health Services (Mogale Sub-District)
Operational Manager Nursing - Specialty: Primary Health Care - West Rand District Health Services (Westonaria Sub-District)
Operational Manager General Stream PNA-5 MEDICAL ADMISSION WARD (Re-advertisement those who previously applied are encouraged to re-apply) - Helen Joseph Hospital
Social Work - Helen Joseph Hospital
2x Dentists - Wits Oral Health Centre
HRD (PMDS, Skills Development & Training Coordinator) - South Rand District Hospital
Clinical Manager: ERRATUM (People who have previously applied are encouraged to apply) - Helen Joseph Hospital
Operational Manager Nursing - West Rand District Health Services (Merafong Sub-District)
Operational Manager Nursing - Specialty: Primary Health Care - West Rand District Health Services (Merafong Sub-District)
Medical Officer - West Rand District Health Services
Registrar (Medical) - West Rand District Health Services
Occupational Therapist - West Rand District Health Services (Merafong Sub-District)
Chief Physiotherapist - Tembisa Provincial Tertiary Hospital
Food Service Manager - South Rand District Hospital
Linen Supervisor - South Rand District Hospital
Administration Clerk - Tambo Memorial Hospital
Diagnostic Radiographer - South Rand Hospital
Health District (Abcef Sub-District) - Westbury
Clinical Nurse Practitioner - Johannesburg Health District (Abcef Sub-District) Westbury

DON'T BE A VICTIM OF BURSARY SCAMS AND FAKE JOBS ADVERTS!

Individuals looking at applying for government jobs, bursaries and learning opportunities should consider tips below:

- Search for opportunities on verified government platforms including social media platforms, websites and adverts through reliable newspapers, e.g. the Gauteng e-Recruitment System (Professional Job Centre), Department of Public Service Administration (DPSA) vacancy circular.
- Always follow instructions carefully and fill in Z83 with precision.
- Students who want to study towards a Higher Certificate in Emergency Medical Care (one year) or Diploma in Emergency Medical Care (two years) at Legbone College of Emergency Care. For more info visit: <https://lcoec.ac.za>
- Study towards a Diploma in nursing in various specialties including critical care nursing, trauma and emergency nursing, amongst others at the Gauteng College of Nursing. For more info, please call: 011 644 8946



NOTE: Applications should be submitted strictly online at the following E-Recruitment portal:

<https://jobs.gauteng.gov.za/>. No hand delivered, faxed or e-mailed applications will be accepted. NB: For assistance with online applications please e-mail your query to e-recruitment@gauteng.gov.za.