



GAUTENG PROVINCE

HEALTH
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

MEDIA STATEMENT

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ACTING GAUTENG MEC FOR HEALTH CALLS FOR COMPASSION AND PATIENCE TOWARDS PEOPLE WITH DOWN SYNDROME

The Gauteng Acting MEC for Health, Jacob Mamabolo, has today called for compassion and understanding for people with Down Syndrome, as South Africa observes the National Down Syndrome Day.

This day is commemorated annually on October 20 to create awareness about Down syndrome and to communicate facts about the condition.

The World Down Syndrome Day is on 21 March and the theme for this year is “We Decide”: all people with Down syndrome should have full participation in decision making about matters relating to, or affecting, their lives. Effective and meaningful participation is a core human rights principle supported by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).

“It is important that as we observe this National Down Syndrome Day, we show compassion, understanding and patience and part of doing that is to ensure we do not take decision for people with Down syndrome without consulting them, and making them part of decision making process, especially those that affect their lives,” pleaded MEC Mamabolo.

Down syndrome is a chromosomal disorder arising at conception. There is an extra number 21 chromosome (Trisomy 21) which causes delays in physical and intellectual development

Facts about Down syndrome

- People with Down syndrome have mild to moderate mental damage.
- One in 1 000 babies born in developed countries and 1 in 650 babies born in developing countries is affected by down syndrome.
- The cause of Down syndrome is not related to age, race, religion or socio-economic situations.
- 80 percent of children affected by Down syndrome are born from mothers under the age of 35, although women over the age of 35 are at a higher risk of having a child with Down syndrome.
- Although Down syndrome cannot be cured, there is a variety of medical care to treat problems associated with the disease.
- Children with Down syndrome can be included in normal schools with regular academic procedures.
- People with Down syndrome can live up to the age of 50 to 55.

MEC Mamabolo furthermore, commended all health workers across the province who manage patients that present with Down Syndrome condition.

“One also wishes to express gratitude to all the dedicated professionals in the employ of the Department who work as occupational therapists, physiotherapists, speech therapists and audiologists, amongst others at all health care facilities, including primary healthcare centres, providing support to families with children with Down syndrome, we are grateful for the work that you do for these families,” said the MEC.

Ends

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