



Kwa-Zulu-Natal Premier Senzo Mchunu has called for decisive leadership to ensure that the province turns the tide against HIV and AIDS.

“Uniformity and visible leadership at all levels is needed urgently because HIV continues to threaten the social fabric of our societies,” Mchunu said.

He was speaking today at Greys Hospital in his capacity as the chairperson of the Provincial Council on Aids. Members of the council include MECs, Heads of Departments, mayors, community leaders and NGOs.

He emphasized a need for a united front against the pandemic stressing that confusing messages about HIV and AIDS should be avoided at all cost.

“Avoiding unsafe sex and messages of behavioral change must be promoted and sustained in order to prevent new infections. Endless debates will hamper our efforts and we believe that we need to focus on ensuring treatment adherence as well as on campaigns around testing and counseling for confirmed HIV patients.”

“We invite leaders from all political parties, in provincial and local government, traditional, religious leaders and those in civil society to ensure an integrated action in order to turn this situation around.”

“Leaders of society must work with communities to create ward based grassroots response involving all sectors of the community and acting together outside party political and partisan interests to save our people from this pandemic.”

“As part of the build up to the 21<sup>st</sup> International AIDS Conference we will mobilize Volunteer Corps of youth whose vibrancy and energy will help drive a programme to change behavior and mobilize the youth into a force to build our society.”

“Young people hold the key to the future but unfortunately, as they grow, they are increasingly exposed to reproductive health risks such as sexual transmitted infections and unplanned pregnancies.”

“Critically, the 21<sup>st</sup> International AIDS Conference provides a platform for all of us to strengthen our efforts in the fight against this scourge. The presence of international delegates will enable us to learn best practices and enhance our strategies in order to make an impact at local levels.”

“As the province we want to emerge out of the conference with strategies that will ensure an improvement in the AIDS awareness campaigns as well as health promotion activities.”

Please Note: **The major achievements in KZN:**

- Reduction in reported HIV and AIDS related deaths from 67 429 in 2008/09 to 54 337 in 2010/11;
- Initiation of HIV-positive patients with a CD4 count of 500 or less on antiretroviral treatment, as opposed to the previous CD4 count of 350 before January 2015, and 200 before that.



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- All HIV-positive pregnant women will also receive lifelong treatment, regardless of their CD4 counts.
- Reduction of Mother to Child transmission from 22 % in 2008 to 1.3 % in 2014;
- TB treatment success rate in 2008 was at 73% and at 84% in 2013; and Improvement of life expectancy from 54 years to 60 years.