

PRESS STATEMENT

Lessons to be drawn from KwaZulu Natal's integrated approach to HIV, health and social services

KwaZulu Natal's integration programme succeeding in combining HIV services with services for cervical and breast cancer, TB, education and other critical social and health issues

GENEVA, 29 September 2011—The Executive Director of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) commended the Premier of KwaZulu-Natal Dr Zweli Mkhize on his commitment to integrating HIV with health and social and economic services.

Through the integrated approach adopted in KwaZulu-Natal local communities have a one stop shop through which they have easy access to information, health services and a broad range of social and economic services addressing poverty, education and development.

“This holistic approach to accessing health and social services is not only efficient but effective and serves as a model for other provinces and indeed other countries across the region,” said Michel Sidibé who was on a seven day visit to South Africa to learn more about the progress and challenges the country is facing in scaling-up its response to HIV. “The work being done here is an example of how to bring services to the heart of the community, to where they are most needed.”

The Premier of KwaZulu-Natal, Dr Zweli Mkhize, has played a leading role decentralising South Africa's AIDS response and in integrating HIV into the economic and social agenda of the province. The provincial government has put in place integrated programmes to address HIV, TB, breast and cervical cancer, poverty, food security, and a range of other health and social services.

“By bridging HIV services with other services the community needs we believe that we can help South Africa to reach our national targets of reducing the number of new HIV infections by 50% by 2015 and in significantly expanding the number of people on antiretroviral treatment,” said Dr Zweli Mkhize. “Our model is working.”

HIV prevalence was 39.5% in 2009 in KwaZulu-Natal, the highest in South Africa. The integrated approach adopted by the provincial government of KwaZulu-Natal has already contributed to increasing the uptake of HIV testing reaching 2.9 million people in the Province as of end of June 2011. It has also expanded access to lifesaving antiretroviral therapy to 489 801 in 518 sites in the Province and in reducing the rate of infections from mother to child from 21% five years ago to 2.8% in 2011.

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UNAIDS

UNAIDS, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, is an innovative United Nations partnership that leads and inspires the world in achieving universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support. Learn more at unaids.org.

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