



ESWATINI NATIONAL AIDS PROGRAMME

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“Government is committed to continue investments in HIV response and to reach the ambitious goals of stopping new infections and AIDS related deaths to achieve the vision of ending AIDS by 2022.”



HIV Self-Testing Campaign Launch



Adolescent Campaign Launch



Inside this Issue

Programme Manager's Foreword	3
Adolescent Campaign Launch	4-5
Red Cross Volunteers for Manzini Door to Door Campaign on COVID-19 Commissioned by the Ministry of Health	6
Red Cross Volunteers for Manzini Door to Door Campaign on COVID-19 Commissioned by the Ministry of Health	7
HIV Self-Testing Campaign Launch	8-10
Hygiene Packs Distribution	11
World Health Organisation Donated Medical Supplies Worth E4.5 Million	12
Social Corner	13

FOREWORD



***SNAP Programme Manager
Mr Muhle Dlamini***

The Eswatini National AIDS Programme (SNAP) was involved in the adolescent campaign launch, which aimed at prioritising and further MOH and NERCHAs existing initiatives, to ensure that health care remains adequate, professional, confidential and youth friendly to break down barriers to health and wellbeing.

The aim of the campaign was to keep adolescent health even during the COVID-19 pandemic with an enhanced understanding of HIV/AIDS for adolescents and to ensure that they continue to protect themselves from HIV, unplanned pregnancies and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Despite achieving the (95/95/95) global target there still is a long way to go and together as a nation we can achieve the goal of having an HIV/AIDS free generation.

It is important for people to know their HIV status; the HIV self-test launch is in line with the ministry's vision of easy access to care. Individuals and couples can now do the test themselves discreetly and conveniently. Remember that "HIV still matters during COVID-19".

We need to brace ourselves for the harsh reality of the second wave of COVID-19 during and post festive season. Let us "Do It All": wash your hands with clean running water or use an alcohol based sanitizer, wear your face mask and maintain the social distance of more than 1 meter.

ADOLESCENT CAMPAIGN LAUNCH



Proceedings of the campaign launch in pictures

The Ministry of Health launched the Adolescent Campaign programme on the 12th of August 2020, at the Football Association Technical Centre. The event was themed ***“HIV matters during COVID-19”***.

The event was graced by the presence of the Right Honourable Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Eswatini Ambrose Mandvulo Dlamini, the Hhohho Regional Administrator Princess Tsandzile, the Honourable Minister of Health Lizzie Nkosi and senator Prince Mshengu the chairperson of parliament senate portfolio committee.

The objectives of the campaign were:

- **To prioritize and further support MOH & NERCHAs existing initiatives to ensure that healthcare remains adequate, professional, confidential and youth friendly to break down barriers to health and well-being**
- **To keep adolescents healthy even during**

the pandemic of COVID-19 with an enhanced understanding of HIV/AIDS for adolescents and to ensure that they continue to protect themselves from HIV, unplanned pregnancies and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

The Prime Minister, began his speech by highlighting that the Kingdom of Eswatini has been able to put up a brave and emphatic response to HIV/AIDS and stated that the achievements that were made in the 3 decades are showing both nationally and internationally, as the Kingdom of Eswatini was declared by UNAIDS as one of the few countries to reach the global target of 95/95/95.

This means that 95% of people living with HIV are tested and 95% of those tested are enrolled on treatment and ensuring that those who are on treatment, 95% of them are virally suppressed and therefore cannot transmit the HIV virus.

He proceeded to appreciate the development partners and donors of the country for providing tech-

nical, financial and infrastructural support in ensuring the delivery of quality HIV services and that the achievements would have not been possible if it was not for the consistent support from partners.

“Government is committed to continue investing in HIV response and to reach the ambitious goals of stopping new infections and AIDS related deaths to achieve the vision of ending AIDS by 2022.” noted the Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister then expressed his concern about the threat posed by COVID-19 to the limited Government budget, as it has stretched it beyond limits, and also introduced new strains and further threatened the delivery of health services including HIV. He also expressed his gratitude to the frontliners in the COVID-19 response .

“You have saved lives in this period and I urge you to continue to do your best”. urged the Prime Minister.

He proceeded to urge all partners to take a seat back and reflect on the interconnection between HIV response and COVID-19. He also mentioned that lessons should be learned from the hard work and that history should be their teacher and respond to these twin-epidemics with hindsight knowledge. Furthermore, that COVID-19 is following the same pattern that was experienced with the HIV epidemic.

He also warned people living with HIV who know

their status but are not on treatment that they might be at a greater risk of getting the Coronavirus or developing severe symptoms.

Dlamini went on to speak to the youth, particularly young girls. He mentioned that investing in young people provides hope that a new generation will grow thus providing leadership in future. He further requested that the young people should take heed of advice provided to them, especially in response to the twin-epidemics of HIV and COVID-19.

The prevention efforts should be scaled up especially for girls who are at risk of contracting HIV as well as their peers and partners.

He proceeded to encourage everyone to play their part in the response to the epidemics. He further mentioned that partnership with Project Last Mile, was made in order to develop skills in young people, to protect themselves and empower them on HIV and AIDS, sexual reproductive health rights and enhance their capacity in responding to COVID-19.

Dlamini concluded by stating that through this campaign, the message being conveyed was that “HIV still matters during COVID-19”. Adolescents must get tested for HIV, adhere to HIV treatment, use HIV prevention commodities and as adolescents travel to areas where they can access these services, it is important that the COVID-19 precautions are observed at all times.

RED CROSS VOLUNTEERS FOR MANZINI DOOR TO DOOR CAMPAIGN ON COVID-19 COMMISSIONED BY THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH



Manzini Red Cross Volunteers during the door to door COVID-19 Campaign

The Ministry of Health Dr. Vusi Magagula, the Director of Health Services commissioned Red Cross volunteers on the 30th of June 2020, to begin the visitation of local homesteads in identified hotspots around the Manzini region.

This was after the World Health Organisation, together with UNICEF partnered with the Baphalali Eswatini Red Cross society and the Ministry of Health to strengthen the COVID-19 door-to-door (gate-to-gate) awareness campaign in the Manzini region.

The objectives of the project were:

- **To ascertain the knowledge gap between the surge in COVID-19 cases and perception in information gaps which might give rise in cases**
- **To implement in view of understanding some risky behaviours and notable barriers which could also help understand the reasons behind the surge in cases.**

The volunteers were first trained on understanding the COVID-19 disease and were then given risk communication tools to facilitate the engagement process.

The project deployed a total number of sixty Red Cross volunteers to disseminate information through the gate-to-gate engagement. The deployment of volunteers was done through strategic alignment with their places of residence to minimise travel costs and enable a more localised response with regional health motivators supporting the dissemination.

The teams were segregated into Manzini city, Coates Valley, Moneni, Fairview, Makholweni, Hillside, William Pitcher, Ngwane Park, Ka-Shali, Sihlahleni, Ludwala, Police Camp, Kwaluseni, Mahlabatsini, Mathangeni, Mbikwakhe, Eteni, and Logoba, Mantsonga, and Nhlabeni. Lead volunteers were selected to better manage the teams. All teams were paired to help create a peer support engagement and provide social support with team members.

A total of 9944 people were reached by this campaign. Furthermore, they also distributed 1450 cloth masks, handwashing soaps and 5000 posters, communicating the proper use of face masks, handwashing steps, respiratory hygiene and home care for COVID-19 .

RED CROSS VOLUNTEERS FOR HHOHHO DOOR TO DOOR CAMPAIGN ON COVID-19 COMMISSIONED BY THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH



Hhohho Red Cross Volunteers during the door to door COVID-19 Campaign

The campaign was then further implemented for the Hhohho region after the region also began experiencing more COVID-19 cases.

The team was commissioned by the WHO Acting Representative Dr. Brian Chirombo, the Ministry of Health Deputy Director-Public Health Ms. Rejoice Nkambule and Deputy Director- Clinical Dr. Velephi Okello. Also present was the Hhohho Regional Health Management Team. The team was welcomed by the Mpolonjeni Indvuna Thang’thini Mabuza

To show his full support to the campaign, the Indvuna assigned the team to two community police to address issues of compliance with community members in ensuring that the teams receives full support and cooperation from people in the community. Mabuza said this will ensure the smooth running of the campaign thus yielding full results, which are

to reduce the number of COVID-19 cases in the area.

Dr. Chirombo reminded the teams about the COVID-19 guidelines and further urged them to follow the guidelines to ensure that the spread of the disease is stopped in the community.

The Ministry of Health took five teams from the Manzini door-to-door campaign to expedite the campaign in the Hhohho region.

The teams were comprised of surveillance officers, emergency preparedness and response (EPR) officers, medical doctors and nurses who were sent out to the community to do intensified education, screening and COVID-19 swabbing.

The screening tools was used by the teams for the exercise, of which high risk contacts who meet the criteria for testing are taken specimen which is then sent to the laboratory.

HIV SELF-TESTING CAMPAIGN LAUNCH



Panel of the HIV Self-testing launch posing for a group photo

The Ministry of Health in partnership with PSI hosted a HIV self-testing campaign at Mountain Inn, on the 10th September 2020. Notable guests of the event were; the Minister of Health Lizzie Nkosi, Director of Health services Dr. Vusi Magagula and the acting World Health Organisation Country Representative Brian Chirombo.

Dr. Bernhard Kerschberger, Head of Mission at MSF, presented on MSF and HIV self-testing (HIVST) in the Shiselweni region and also lessons learnt. He gave a background on the landscape in 2014/2015, where he stated that the access to HIVST was already (informally) in Southern Africa, that the World Health Organisation had been giving guidance since 2015 and that there was lack of guidance for its wider use in Eswatini.

He further mentioned that MSF and SNAP had collaborated in HIVST since 2016, whereby they were working on a HIVST country implementation framework, and in addition, other stakeholders were also engaged and that the HIVST model of care was already piloted in the Shiselweni region since 2017. He then mentioned that the advantages of HIVST are that, it is done at a time

and place of convenience, testing is done privately and that is empowering.

Dr Bernard then emphasized that HIVST has the potential of improving faculty-based health care services and that the integration of HIV testing services at community based health care points can increase the access to various basic prevention and care services. He went on to highlight that families that are affected by HIV and TB should also know their HIV statuses. Furthermore, he mentioned that convenience in HIV testing is crucial for acceptance and diagnostic services by communities

He went on to point out that in remote communities, not all communities have access to nearby health care facilities, however rural health motivators can bridge that gap, as MSF had empowered and trained rural health motivators in the distribution of HIVST, for essential services to be closer to rural and remote communities. In addition to that MSF has also trained community volunteers on the use and distribution of HIVST kits thus remote communities have benefited the most

especially those lacking access to health care services and for target population at risks of HIV infection.

Bernhard further highlighted that traditional healers were also involved in the distribution of these kits in order to reach men, and that this new approach was piloted by MSF and MOH. However, there were impacts posed by the COVID-19 epidemic on HIVST, such as change in the health care provision and that social distancing and movement restriction called that new approaches to be implemented.

However, he noted that COVID-19 can accelerate the expansion of HIVST services into communities as HIVST was an opportunity to maintain testing levels and involve communities despite COVID-19 restrictions.

Sister Nokulunga Dlamini from Motshane Clinic went on to present on health worker's experiences in distributing at health care facilities. She then briefly highlighted the objectives of the kit distribution.

objectives of HIV Self-testing kit distribution kit:

- **To increase HIV testing among the population currently not reached by health care workers, especially those who are reluctant to come for HIV testing and counselling.**
- **To increase HIV testing priority group (adolescent pregnant and lactating women, key population, truck drivers, etc.**

Dlamini went on to highlight on the services offered at Motshane clinic, these are; provider initiated HTS, client initiated HTS and outreach/community HTS. In addition, through HTS optimisation the facility ensures that all patients coming to the facility for health services are screened for HTS eligibility, also a risk assessment is con-

ducted to test all those eligible.

“In order to reach out to more people, HTS services are offered in various modalities which include index testing, community HIV testing and distribution of HIV Self-testing kits”, said Nokulunga.

She continued to lament that through the guidance of SNAP and technical assistance of Elizabeth Glazer Paediatric AIDS Foundation, the facility has been able to distribute HIVST kits in October 2019.

Motshane clinic was able to surpass the target of 115%, whereby from the MDT the facility had a goal to distribute at least 100% HIVST kits per month.

However, despite the successes the clinic has had, there were challenges encountered such as, limited stock of HIV self -testing kits due to their ordering system, the clinic's HIV Self-testing register has no column to capture confirmed HIV positive clients using the national algorithm and also some patients would give wrong phone numbers.

Dlamini concluded by stating that in the future the clinic plans to increase the accessibility of HIV Self-Testing kits to key populations and to clients and partners, liaising with the KP focal person and facilitate linkages of individuals who test positive. Also through the provision of appropriate prevention measures when HIV negative clients are high risk groups, by offering them PrEP and VMMC.

Minister of Health Lizzie Nkosi lastly officiated the launch. She articulated that ***“Tihlole wena, Do it yourself”***. The Minister firstly commended present participants of the launch. She said that their presence was a testimony in the importance of the fight against HIV and AIDS.

“The progress made after three decades of battling the HIV epidemic is both humbling and inspiring. Humbling because we cannot forget that many people have lost their lives to HIV since the epidemic began. Inspiring because together we have made significant progress in achieving dramatic results in saving lives and preventing new infections”, the Minister elaborated

She then mentioned that despite having positive outcomes in the past, now is the time to intensify efforts in order to complete the unfinished business. The Minister also explained HIV-Self-testing as an emerging approach that provides an opportunity for people to test themselves discreetly and conveniently.

Therefore empowering those who may not otherwise test, particularly among high risk populations to know their HIV statuses.

Nkosi then mentioned that HIV Self-testing has the potential of having a high impact, low cost intervention to reach population groups that are not

testing thus increasing the number of people living with HIV who are identified and then initiated on treatment.

In addition, HIV Self-testing also provides an opportunity to provide linkages to HIV prevention services for those who test negative. As the approaches to HIV self-test includes community and facility based HIV Self-testing in both public and private sectors.

She went on to extend her sincere gratitude to partners and development agencies who made these targeted testing strategies possible. The partners and development agencies included MSF, UNAIDS, PEPFAR and also Global Fund, who supported the public health sector with almost 200 000 HIV Self-testing kits.

“The HIV self-test is intended as a HIV screening tool that has the potential to meet and address the needs and challenges of increasing access to the knowledge of HIV statuses” the Minister assured emaSwati.

She concluded by encouraging emaSwati to have the courage to put their health first and reminded them that the only way to overcome the HIV epidemic together is through affirmative individual actions and choices.

THE DISTRIBUTION OF HYGIENE PACKS AT DIFFERENT HEALTH CARE FACILITIES



Distribution of the hygiene packs at the different health care facilities nationally in pictures

Following the handover of hygiene packs on the 29th May 2020, that were donated by UNAIDS in response to COVID-19, a total number of 850 kits were received and later distributed by SNAP through health care facilities, in all the four regions of the country.

Since the Covid-19 global pandemic was declared a National Emergency on the 17th March 2020, by His Majesty King Mswati III, the Ministry of Health with the support of implementing partners, has conducted a variety of Comprehensive National, Regional and Facility-based trainings on the prevention and management of COVID-19, as well as some trainings focussing on specific areas of the COVID-19 response.

This included the provision of Personalized Protective Equipment (PPE) and also considering hand

washing with running soapy water and also the cleaning of surfaces.

The distributions covered PLHIV who are within the SNAP program working in facilities and have been in the frontline in response to the pandemic, where they were providing screening for COVID-19 and linking clients to care, which was also part of the Community Commodity Distribution (CCD) of HIV drugs and Non-Communicable Disease Drugs.

On behalf of Eswatini National AIDS Programme, National Adherence and Peer Support Officer Nompilo Gwebu distributed a 3 months supply of hygiene packs which includes; soaps and Jik. The distribution reached people living with HIV, where 547 adults and 53 young people benefitted from the distribution.

WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION DONATED MEDICAL SUPPLIES WORTH E4.5 MILLION



Minister of Health Lizzie Nkosi receiving donations from the acting WHO Country Representative Dr. Brian Chirombo

On the 21st of August, WHO donated medical supplies to the Ministry of Health to the tune of E 4.5 million. These supplies included medical equipment, laboratory test kits and personal protective equipment (PPE) for health workers. The donation was made at the Eswatini National AIDS Program (SNAP) offices.

Handing over the donation was the Acting WHO Country Representative Dr. Brian Chirombo. Among the items donated included 19 oxygen concentrators which were medical grade devices used to deliver oxygen to patients with breathing related disorders such as those suffering from moderate to severe COVID-19.

The PPE included face shields, isolation gowns, surgical masks, KN95 respirator masks and protective goggles. “Health workers are at the forefront of the COVID-19 response and their protection is fundamental not only for their health but also to ensure that they could provide efficient and quality services”, narrated Dr. Chirombo.

Chirombo said WHO was a technical agency and their support was mainly technical and at community level. “We currently have three experts in the country supporting the COVID-19 response. They include laboratory response and emergency operations centre experts”

said Dr Chirombo.

He further emphasised that though they provided some funding which included donations, it was only a small part of the support they provided the country, adding that their main support was through technical experts who were assets of the WHO family.

Receiving the donation, Minister of Health Lizzie Nkosi said the ministry was grateful for the tremendous support which WHO was giving to the country during this difficult time. “The Ministry recognises and appreciates the medical equipment to support COVID-19 patients and the PPE for frontline workers to ensure that they were safe at all times”, Nkosi noted.

She highlighted that WHO supported Eswatini in every pillar towards the response to COVID-19 by strengthening coordination of governance, effective engagement with communities, the national referral laboratory and strengthening the national surveillance and data management systems at national and regional levels.

SOCIAL CORNER

The Swaziland National AIDS Programme celebrated a farewell function for; Siphwe Dlamini, SNAP Secretary, Dr Herve Kambale, SNAP DSD Focal Person and Nondumiso Ncube, SNAP Pharmacovigilance Focal Person. These departing individuals were part of the SNAP programme. They were hardworking, dedicated and devoted individuals who strived for excellence in the provision of quality health care access to the people of Eswatini. For the appreciation of their efforts, SNAP celebrated them in style.





KNOWLEDGE NUGGETS

Mgcini weSive

COVID-19

WE DO IT ALL
3Ws

WASH OUR HANDS
WEAR OUR MASK
WATCH OUR DISTANCE

..ifike ka Ngci!

unicef

Mgcini weSive

YENTA WONKHE
3Gs

GEZA TANDLA
GCOKA SIFONYO
GCINA UMKHATSI

..ifike ka Ngci!

unicef

Mgcini weSive

NGENTA WONKHE
3Gs

GEZA TANDLA
GCOKA SIFONYO
GCINA UMKHATSI

..ifike ka Ngci!

unicef

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..ifike ka Ngci!

unicef

Mgcini weSive

YENTA WONKHE
3Gs

GEZA TANDLA
GCOKA SIFONYO
GCINA UMKHATSI

..ifike ka Ngci!

unicef



Swaziland National AIDS Programme

History

The Swaziland National AIDS Program was established in 1987 to respond to the HIV Epidemic. The core mandate of the national AIDS program is to coordinate health sector interventions as they account for more than 70% of the total HIV response.

VISION

Winning the fight against HIV and AIDS through effort for an AIDS free generation.

MISSION

To improve the health of the people of ESwatini through an effectively coordinated health sector response to HIV and AIDS.



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