



## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **Premier Ndlovu calls for strong measures to reduce new HIV infections in Mpumalanga.**

The Mpumalanga Premier, Mr. Mandla Ndlovu says a strong partnership between all government institutions, the civil society and funding agencies is a solution to overcome the prevalence of HIV in the province.

This as the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) cites Mpumalanga, in its 2022 South African HIV, Incidence, Prevalence and Behaviour Survey report, as a province with a high prevalence rate of HIV in the country.

Mpumalanga has recorded 17.4 percent in 2022 compared to 19.4 percent in 2017. Premier Ndlovu convened a sitting of the Mpumalanga Provincial AIDS Council (MPAC) on Monday, to explore measures to reduce the new HIV infections. MECs, Executive Mayors, representatives of the Civil Society, development partners and funding agencies participated in the session.

Mr. Ndlovu says the HSRC research is an essential planning tool to ensure a proper deployment of resources where they are needed the most. "We have been advised that prevention is cheaper than treatment. Therefore all of us must make the HIV topic, a part of our engagement with our communities in all public platforms. In so doing, we will mobilize our communities to test for HIV, initiate and keep those who test positive on the ARV programme for viral suppression," Mr. Ndlovu emphasized.

The HSRC survey report depicts Gert Sibande District as the leading District with the highest HIV prevalence in the province, and the Nkangala District with low figures. Gert Sibande recorded 20.5 percent, Ehlanzeni District recorded 16 percent while Nkangala District has 13.1 percent.

The province is also listed among the three with a high number of people on the ARV programme in the country. Efforts are being intensified to ensure that the international targets of 95-95-95 are realized. The targets are designed to mobilize communities to test in order to know their status, to initiate those who test positive on the ARV programme, and to ensure that they are virally suppressed.

So far 87.3 percent are aware of their status, 94.5 percent are on ARV treatment and 94.0 percent are on viral suppression.

The sitting resolved the following:

- To adopt a long term strategy to care for those who test positive.
- To heighten campaigns which promote the use of ARVs, among the youth and adult males.
- To increase the number of male circumcision from the age of 15 years.
- To enhance accurate public awareness of effective HIV prevention measures which include the use of condoms.

Ends...

**Issued by the Mpumalanga Provincial Government**

Office of the Premier

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