

iLembe District commemorates World AIDS Day

The KwaZulu-Natal MEC for Human Settlement and Public Works Ms Peggy Nkonyeni, who is also the Operation Sukuma Sakhe Champion together with local leadership of iLembe District joined the rest of the world in celebrating International World Aids Day on the 1st of December 2019 at Ndwedwe Johnny Makhathini Hall. The event was held under the theme: "Communities make the difference".

World AIDS Day is commemorated each year on the 1st of December and is an opportunity for every community to unite in the fight against HIV, show support for people living with HIV and remember those who have died. South Africa has come a long way in fighting against HIV and AIDS. In 2012 government implemented the National Strategic Plan on HIV, Sexually Transmitted Infections and Tuberculosis 2012-2016. The delegation led by MEC Peggy Nkonyeni visited the nearby Mavela Siyanakekela Care Hospice near Ezindlovini area in Ward 14. They also brought groceries for the elderly and interacted with them about their living conditions.

His Worship the Mayor of iLembe District Municipality Councillor Siduduzo Gumede said,

"KwaZulu-Natal has the most residents in the age bracket living with HIV - 1.4 million. The provinces with the highest prevalence rates in SA are Mpumalanga (20.9%), Free State (21.3%), and KwaZulu-Natal (24%)". Let's unite and ease the pain and suffering caused by HIV/AIDS to our communities, children are more vulnerable to common causes of death that affect all children in developing countries, such as malaria, malnutrition, pneumonia, tuberculosis (TB), diarrhoea, and vaccine-preventable diseases such as measles," said Mayor Gumede.

Speaking in her capacity as the iLembe Champion, MEC Nkonyeni said great strides have been made in the fight against HIV and AIDS since the era of former Presidents Nelson Mandela and Thabo Mbeki.

"We have come a long way from the era of the infamous

AZT drug and other earlier cocktail of anti-retroviral treatment to the pill that was recently unveiled by Health Minister Dr Zweli Mkhize.

Nowadays, more and more people are dying from diseases such as cancer as well as Tuberculosis. We have to be multi-pronged in

our approach and make sure we screen people for all illnesses," remarked MEC Nkonyeni.