

**ADDRESS BY THE MEC OF HEALTH, DR PHOPHI RAMATHUBA  
DURING THE CHEKA IMPILO-WORLD AIDS DAY BUILD UP  
CAMPAIGN AT MAZWI VILLAGE, LETABA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY.**

**05 NOVEMBER 2019**

Programme Director;

Mayor of Letaba Local Municipality;

District Executive Manager;

MMCs and Councilors;

**AVUXENI, Thobela**

Today we bring the Cheka Impilo campaign to Mopani District Municipality with a sole intention of encouraging men to stand up and know their health status.

Health status is not limited to HIV/AIDS but a wide range of ailments perpetuated by lifestyle habits.

We are here as the Provincial Government to say to you all: **Cheka Impilo: Check your Health.**

Mopani represents one of our most progressive economic hub in the province. Therefore, it attracts a lot of people who either come here to compete for the limited economic opportunities or are here for residential reasons.

In the long run, the people end up forgetting about the significance of preserving themselves, while pursuing a better life.

Lifestyle diseases such as diabetes, obesity and the scourge of HIV/AIDS increases. That also increases the burden on our healthcare system. The competition for public healthcare services becomes strenuous. Hence, we encourage people to engage in deliberate and focused mechanisms to counter the negative effects of diseases on our health.

Cheka Impilo is aimed at rallying members of the community to take care of themselves and conserve their health status through active ways.

This migration of people also comes with its own challenges, including the challenge of healthcare provision and awareness. Government has taken a conscious and deliberate decision to educate people regarding health related matters.

Cheka Impilo ranks amongst the most important programs initiated by our National Government, chaired by the Deputy President of the Republic, Mr David Mabuza.

The Cheka Impilo campaign aims to accelerate screening and testing for HIV, tuberculosis (TB), sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and non-communicable diseases such as hypertension and diabetes.

This and other diseases impedes on the strategic objectives of increasing the life expectancy of our people.

As government, our wish is to have a healthy and productive nation.

During his first State of the Nation address in February 2018, President Cyril Ramaphosa committed to initiate an additional 2 million people on HIV treatment by 2020, find 88 000 missing TB cases annually and screen 7 million people for non-communicable diseases in the first year.

We are happy to report that as the provincial government we are making significant inroads with regards to the pronouncements made by the President. We will work hand in hand with the National Department of Health to ensure maximum participation from our social partners and progressive stakeholders.

We will embark on a rigorous Cheka Impilo campaign across our five districts, working with traditional leaders, community healthcare workers, social partners, municipalities and indeed

members of the society to fight the scourge of disease and build a healthy nation.

We are hopeful as a province that the National Department of Health will support our efforts and provide resources so that all this campaigns become a success.

Our government's commitment to providing quality, accessible and affordable public healthcare services remains unmatched.

We want to emphasize that our government has invested significantly in expanding access to healthcare facilities, providing access to top quality medication and providing rehabilitative services to the sick.

During the State of the Province Address, we made an observation that people living with HIV/AIDS are now living longer and productively because of our policy interventions. At the time, Limpopo had over 350 000 patients on the ARV Programme.

We have waged a serious battle against the mother-to-child transmission of HIV/AIDS. In the previous year, the rate of infection was at 0.96% - this number has now reduced to 0.77%.

It should be our collective responsibility to ensure continuous screening and testing of various diseases. Government facilities should be capacitated not only to treat diseases but also to help in preventative mechanisms.

We should move away from curative healthcare system to a new, modern day model where we prevent diseases. It is important to educate our about the dangers of smoking, alcohol and drug abuse, unprotected sex, unhealthy eating habits, non-exercise and other related habits.

Our government fully supports this progressive programme and will ensure its implementation is unhindered and produces the best possible outcomes.

**As I conclude**, let me extend an invitation to all of you to join us on the occasion of the commemoration of World Aids Day in the Vhembe District on the 1<sup>st</sup> of December.

Our people should continue to abstain, be faithful and condomize.

Thank you!