

**SPEECH FOR DEPUTY-MINISTER OF HEALTH FOR THE ROTARY
FAMILY HEALTH DAY EVENT ON TUESDAY 15 NOVEMBER. 2022:
KWAMASHU, KAZULU NATAL.**

Programme Directors, Ms N Simelane: MEC for Health in KZN and Ms Mokgadi Malahlela: CSF Coordinating Committee Member
eThekweni Metropolitan Mayor, Cllr Kaunda
CEO of Action Group for Family health and AIDS Prevention, Ms Sue Paget
Rotary International President Elect, Mr Gordon McInally
Deputy Chair Person of SANAC, Ms Steve Letsike
SANAC CEO Dr Thembisile Xulu,
Representative of the US Agencies, Dr CG Anne Linnee
UNAIDS Country Director, Dr Eva Kiwango
CSF KZN Chair, Mr Patrick Mdletshe
CSF National 2nd Deputy Chairperson, Ms Sibongile Tshabalala
Representative of the Private Sector Forum, Dr Ernest Peresu
Partners, Colleagues
Community members
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good Morning

The Department of Health (DOH) and the Rotary Action Group for Family Health & AIDS Prevention (RFHA) have enjoyed a ten-year partnership in the delivery of this critical outreach event: **The Rotary Family Health Day (RFHD) campaign** which is currently part of our Health calendar activities on an annual basis since 2013.

Today we launch the 9th annual Rotary Family Health Days' outreach programme and it is always an honour to be part of this massive humanitarian-driven initiative in partnership with the Department, SANAC and partners. As we may know, Rotary Family Health Day's programme is a public private partnership which aims to provide an enabling environment for health-seeking behaviour for communities, not just for HIV Testing Services, but also TB and STI screening and management, NCDs screening and appropriate referrals, and immunization. This initiative always lasts for 3 days

throughout the country at selected sites. These services are usually delivered in an outreach manner to ensure that communities that struggle to get to public health facilities are able to access services during the 3 days.

The RFHD 2022 will focus on the intensification of integrated health and wellness services to communities that were hard hit by the floods earlier this year. We know that the Kwamashu community was one of them and we want to ensure that you are not left behind in our pursuit to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. It is anticipated that this year's event will further contribute significantly towards the informal settlements and farming communities. The RFHD will drive a clarion call to community members to access health, wellness and screening services in order to contribute towards achieving the 95-95-95 UNAIDS targets. Farm workers and farming communities remain key within the agricultural sector and they are critical to ensuring food security in the country, hence this year they will be prioritized through the RFHD.

To date, the Department of Health, RFHA and Rotary Clubs in South Africa through the programme, in partnership with a number of civil society organisations and implementing partners, have reached over 230,000 people from communities in all nine provinces in South Africa providing free access to approximately 750,000 individual free services. The partnership is recognized by the Department to be of strategic importance in its fight against the quadruple burden of disease (now including COVID-19) that is prevalent in South Africa, enabling the Department to reach communities that would otherwise not have easy access to such free comprehensive health services.

The partnership with RFHA is in line with the strategic objective of the NDOH and that of the South African Government to achieve a long and healthy life for all South Africans as articulated in the National Development Plan (2030) and SANAC's National Strategic Plan: 2017 – 2022.

The minimum package of services that is synonymous with this campaign usually includes HIV Testing Services (HTS), TB screening, Body Mass

Index (BMI), immunization and screening for diabetes mellitus, and hypertension and referrals for management.

This year we would like to elevate awareness for measles prevention due to outbreaks that we have had in provinces such as Gauteng and Limpopo. All children should be immunised against measles at 6 and 12 months. Children who have missed doses can also get catch-up doses. Let me remind you of the signs of measles: These include fever (with 3 C's: conjunctivitis (red eyes), coryza (runny nose and cough) followed by rash, usually on the face, neck, trunk, and limbs. Measles infection is usually unpleasant but not always severe. Young children and other individuals with weakened immune systems, however, can develop complications leading to hospitalisation, and in severe cases, death. Suspected cases should be isolated at health care facilities. Measles is highly infectious and spreads rapidly from person to person, so if you suspect that your child or family member may have measles, please alert the facility staff on arrival at the facility. Finally, all care givers and parents are encouraged to check children's Road to Health booklets to make sure that they are up to date with vaccinations and also take the opportunity of additional doses offered in affected areas.

We also know that historically Rotary has had an interest in Polio eradication. Much progress has been made to kick polio out of Africa since 1985 when Rotary International and UNICEF launched its PolioPlus programme, the first initiative to tackle global polio eradication through mass vaccination of children. I must mention that today, South Africa faces a possible threat of polio when our neighbouring countries are affected by vaccine derived Polio viruses outbreaks and as detection of wild polio viruses continues to increase. As we are living in a globalised world, we are always affected by what happens in other countries as has been demonstrated by polio. We all need to be vigilant at all times against signs of polio (sudden onset of floppy paralysis or muscle weakness is the main symptom) and measles as mentioned above. Poliomyelitis has no cure, it can only be prevented by vaccination.

Once again, let me emphasise that by visiting any of the Rotary Family Health Days sites in these 3 days, you will have access to:

Counselling and testing for HIV and referral for treatment for those who test positive and HIV prevention interventions for those who test negative, screening for TB and referral for diagnosis, referral for diseases such as hepatitis, malaria, and some cancers, child health services and assessments including deworming, immunisation and nutritional assessments, screening and management of sexually transmitted infections, and non-communicable diseases such as high blood pressure, cholesterol, and diabetes, health education and awareness, family planning, and antenatal care, information and guidance on healthy lifestyle choices.

The Rotary Action Group for Family Health and AIDS Prevention Inc (RFHA) develops, implements and is the convenor of large scale community development and humanitarian service programs, that provide preventative health care and education to children and families who normally can't access them.

In this past week we had a build-up event in Ndwendwe targeted mainly at young people. As we know young people in South Africa are facing various health challenges and social ills. This very population bears the brunt of the HIV epidemic with a 30% prevalence. We continue to embark on expansion of youth zones to ensure that youth are able to access services within an enabling environment through a health care worker who is trained to deliver youth friendly services including HIV services and SRH and R services. Adolescent girls and young women also face a challenge of unplanned pregnancies that often leads to unsafe abortions. I'd like to encourage our young people to access our public health facilities for safe termination of pregnancies and other available options that may suit them. With regards to our 95-95-95 targets, eThekweni is at 96-79-91 in the adult population. However, when we go deeper with the data we find that children under 15 years are at 86-58-63. We also have gaps with the men especially with the second 95 which is initiation on treatment. From the above data, we can see that we still have a long way to go with the children especially, and we need to make an effort to ensure that children are brought to facilities and outreach events to access services. We also offer prevention interventions within our public health services which include Pre exposure prophylaxis (PreP), Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) male and female condoms and lubricant. The

other major challenge that we are facing is gender-based violence and femicide (GBV and F) and we need to work together to ensure that we fight GBV and F.

SANAC launched a National Youth Prevention Strategy called Zikhala Kanjani in June 2022. The strategy is aimed at reducing incidence of HIV and STIs among South Africa Youth (15-24) by 40% by 2025. As we move towards the launch of the new 5th generation NSP we need to ensure that we work together in a multisectoral manner to fight the quadruple burden of diseases that we face and that we achieve the target of the strategy for youth. At this point, allow me Programme Directors to say a few words on the World AIDS Day (WAD) 2022. On 1st of December, 2022, we'll be commemorating the World AIDS Day (WAD) in the Free State Province: Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality. The event will be led by the Deputy President in his capacity as the Chairperson of SANAC. As we know the WAD has been commemorated since 1988, and this provides the global community with the opportunity to, among others: Commemorate people who have lost their lives due to illnesses related to the epidemic, Raise public awareness about HIV and AIDS, available prevention and treatment options as well as Reflect on the progress made in the fight against HIV and set milestones and targets.

In South Africa, the World AIDS Day commemoration is coordinated by SANAC, which brings together government, civil society and business sectors in the fight against HIV and AIDS. It is my pleasure to launch the theme of this year's WAD, which is "**EQUALISE AND INTEGRATE TO END AIDS**". This theme is based on the Global Theme '**EQUALISE**'. Equalise is a call to the global community to act to address the inequalities, which drive the AIDS pandemic, using practical proven effective measures. Addressing inequalities is critical to tackle social and structural barriers that result in unequal and inadequate access to basic human rights as identified in the constitution and the Bill of Rights as well as in the National Strategic Plan for HIV, TB and STIs. Furthermore, the theme focusses on shifting the harmful cultural and social norms, addressing patriarchy, preventing gender-based violence, confronting stigma and discrimination as well as human rights violations.

In conclusion, coming back to the Rotary event, I would like to encourage you to take advantage of these 3 days to access all the available services for yourselves and for your children. I would like to acknowledge the Rotarians and all our partners for the continued support.

I THANK YOU