

**MEDIA STATEMENT**

To: Editors & Health Journalists  
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**MINISTER PHAAHLA WELCOMES 2024 NEW YEAR`S BABIES**

**Pretoria:** Minister of Health Dr Joe Phaahla congratulates mothers of **1703** babies born on the first day of the year 2024 in public health facilities across the country and urges fathers and family members to support mothers to raise children because it takes a village to raise a child.

The first 2024 bundles of joy were born exactly at midnight (00:00) in health facilities in Limpopo (Philadelphia Hospital and Seshego Hospital), Western Cape (Mowbray Maternity Hospital) and North West (Mafikeng Provincial Hospital) respectively.

The country has also recorded at least **190** teenage mothers on the New Year`s Day as compared to slightly over **145** recorded on Christmas Day, and the youngest mothers being the 14-year-olds from KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape provinces. Teen pregnancy is a societal problem which requires all hands on deck because some teenage mothers are likely to face critical social issues like poverty and poor education outcomes with potential to contribute to poor health issues and child welfare.

The Department of Health, in collaboration with sister departments like Social Development, Basic Education and other stakeholders including Higher Health, Love Life and Soul City will intensify sexual and reproductive health awareness campaign countrywide targeting both school-going and out of school youth to empower them with health education and the dangers of early sexual debut, unprotected sex, and other risky sexual behaviours apart from teenage pregnancy.

**A breakdown of Newborn babies delivered on New Year`s Day**

Province	Boys	Girls	Total
Gauteng	200	212	412
Limpopo	100	99	199
Mpumalanga	90	66	156
North-West	55	57	112
Free State	27	41	68
Kwa-Zulu Natal	120	140	260
Western Cape	107	146	253
Eastern Cape	96	104	200
Northern Cape	26	17	43
<b>SA Total</b>	<b>821</b>	<b>882</b>	<b>1703</b>

Mothers and caregivers are reminded that a good environment in the first 1000 days of a child`s life which includes loving care and a nurturing, safe space free from stress and harmful substances are important for children`s optimal growth and development.

Mothers living with HIV can safely breastfeed their babies the same way as mothers without HIV, as long as they consistently adhere to treatment.

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